

TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR IN A HYBRID COURSE:
STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND
TEACHER AND STUDENT
PERCEPTIONS

by

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STATEMENT OF THESIS APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

This M.A. thesis reports on an action-based research project that used a quasi-experimental design and was conducted in two sections of an English grammar and editing skills class taught at the University by the same instructor. One section was a traditional face-to-face (f2f) class while the other one was a hybrid. Students were assigned to sections based on the normal registration process. Action research is designed to assist the teacher in understanding whether hybrid instruction has a positive effect on students' development of English grammar and editing skills; it also investigates teacher and student perceptions of the hybrid and f2f formats. A pretest-posttest design was used to measure whether hybrid instruction had a positive effect on the students' performance. Teachers' perceptions of both formats were investigated through teaching journals, and students' perceptions of the hybrid format were obtained from questionnaires and data from a focus group conducted by a professional from the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE) at the University.

The results of pre- and posttests indicate that there was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of their knowledge of English grammar and editing skills after the treatment. An analysis of the perceptual data indicates that both the teacher and the students had positive perceptions about the hybrid course. However, data also indicated that the hybrid course should be refined in several ways to help students manage their time better and study more effectively during online days. The f2f format was perceived to be equally effective by the teacher; however, managing the

classroom and keeping students' attention in the f2f format was perceived to be challenging.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	viii
CHAPTERS	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	4
Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL).....	4
CALL Tutorials.....	5
Social Computing.....	6
Online Gaming.....	7
Curricular Issues.....	7
Pedagogical Issues.....	9
Perceptual Issues.....	15
SLA Theories and Hybrid Courses.....	15
Teaching Grammar.....	21
3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	28
Research Design.....	28
Participants.....	33
Course Design.....	34
Data Collection Tools.....	35
Quantitative Data.....	37
Qualitative Data.....	39
Data Analysis.....	40
4. RESULTS.....	41
Quantitative Data.....	41
Pretest.....	41
Posttest.....	42
Questionnaire Data.....	43
End of Semester Evaluations.....	52

Qualitative Data.....	53
Teacher Data.....	53
Teacher Perceptions of the Hybrid Format.....	54
Teacher Perceptions of Teaching English Grammar in the Hybrid Format.....	59
Teacher Perceptions of Teaching English Grammar in the Traditional F2f Format.....	67
Learner Data.....	71
Focus Group.....	71
Questionnaire.....	78
End of Semester Evaluations.....	83
5. DISCUSSION.....	85
Teacher and Learner Data.....	86
Limitations of the Study.....	97
Suggestions for Further Studies.....	98
6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	100
APPENDICES	
A. PRETEST AND POSTTEST.....	104
B. QUESTIONNAIRE.....	116
C. FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS.....	122
D. TEACHING JOURNAL QUESTIONS.....	123
REFERENCES.....	124

LIST OF TABLES

3.1	A comparison of class activities	36
4.1	Pretest descriptive statistics	42
4.2	Posttest descriptive statistics	43
4.3	Perception of the hybrid format in general	45
4.4	Students' perceptions of the online component	46
4.5	Students' perceptions of the features peculiar to the hybrid format	47
4.6	Feedback and individualized attention from the instructor	49
4.7	Students' perception of being a community	50
4.8	Students' perceptions of the f2f days	50
4.9	Students' interaction with the online components	51
4.10	Students' perception of responsibility	52
4.11	ESL 1040 schedule	60
4.12	Reasons for which online days are considered beneficial	79

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Prensky (2011) stated that we are living in a world where "our students are all native speakers of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet" (p. 1). Whether teachers like it or not, their students will keep using computers, iPhones, or iPads during classes because they enjoy doing learning activities that involve technology, even homework. In accordance with this recent change in students' profiles and the various online tools that technological advances provide, many language-teaching programs have begun to include courses that integrate online technology in order to engage students more effectively in the learning process. One of these technology-integrated instructional designs is the hybrid course. Hybrid courses can be defined as "courses that integrate online with traditional face-to-face (f2f) class activities in a planned, pedagogically valuable manner; and where a portion of f2f time is replaced by online activity" (Laster, Otte, Picciano, & Sorg, 2005).

Aside from the fact that hybrid courses capitalize on students' love of online technology, they can provide other advantages for students. Scheduling flexibility is one of the biggest advantages of hybrid courses. Other advantages include more engagement in the learning process as students take more responsibility for their own learning, more participation in learning activities due to the available response time, and more online practice opportunities.

In 2009, a fully online English grammar course, ESL 1040 *Grammar and Editing for Non-Native Speakers of English*, was offered to undergraduate international students at the University of Utah through the online learning management system (LMS) referred to as *Blackboard*. The designer and instructor of the online ESL 1040 course, Dr. Anna Krulatz, states that students' performances on tests in this course and their reaction to the online language learning was not as expected: test scores were low, and the students were not satisfied with the course delivery format, stating that it was too complicated for them to navigate through the course using the online learning platform *Blackboard*. In addition, there were insufficient online exercises for them to practice the grammatical structures (A. Krulatz, personal communication, March 8, 2013). Krulatz (2013) also stated that lack of interaction was one of the major problems she observed. Because the course was fully online, the amount of interaction taking place among the students was limited. As a result of dissatisfaction expressed both by the instructor (A. Krulatz, personal communication, March 8, 2013) and the students in the end of semester course evaluations, the online format was suspended. Moreover, the department chair added that it was difficult to convince students to enroll in a fully online course; therefore, the decision to suspend online ESL 1040 was taken (E. Rubin, personal communication, April 1, 2014).

To integrate online technology in ESL 1040 and not jeopardize the quality of the class, a decision was made to offer the ESL 1040 course in a hybrid format. The development of the hybrid course was supported by a grant from Teaching and Learning Technologies (TLT) that was written by the researcher. The funding received from TLT was for designing the course in a hybrid format (the design of the course is explained in

detail in Chapter 3).

Hybrid courses have been reported to be effective in foreign language classes (Rubio & Thomas, 2012); however, studies specifically on hybrid courses that target English grammar for academic purposes have not yet been conducted. To this end, this research study aims to answer the following research questions.

1. Does hybrid instruction have a positive effect on the development of students' knowledge of grammar and editing in the ESL 1040 course?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the hybrid ESL 1040 course?
3. What are learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of the hybrid ESL 1040 course?
4. What actions can be taken to improve the design and the effectiveness of the hybrid ESL 1040 course?
5. How effective is the f2f ESL 1040 course compared to the hybrid ESL 1040 course?

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Hybrid classes, which are also referred to as *blended* classes, can be defined as "courses that integrate online with traditional face-to-face (f2f) class activities in a planned, pedagogically valuable manner; and where a portion of f2f time is replaced by online activity" (Laster et al. 2005). Hybrid classes are different from traditional f2f classes in terms of how the classes are delivered. Because hybrid courses use a learning management system (LMS) that may be new to both the students and the teachers and because f2f contact time is reduced, designing hybrid courses requires careful planning and preparation. In this section, I summarize computer-assisted language learning (CALL) formats and the curricular, pedagogical, and perceptual issues related to hybrid courses based on what previous research suggests. I also analyze hybrid courses in terms of supporting theories in second language acquisition (SLA) and summarize the current issues in the teaching of grammar.

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

Christison and Murray (2014) use the term CALL for all aspects of computer use in language instruction because it is the term most commonly used in North America. Because the Internet is now widely available, CALL has moved from computer programs on CDs to "various permutations and combinations of online and f2f instructional delivery" (p. 40). There are different CALL formats through which online instruction can

be delivered. The formats discussed here are from Blake's (2011) CALL models (see Blake, 2011, for a detailed discussion of each format). These three formats are CALL tutorials, social computing, and online gaming.

CALL Tutorials

CALL tutorials are online exercises that students can do on their own without interacting with their peers or instructor. These types of exercises are typically used for grammar and vocabulary instruction in language classes. Some of the CALL tutorials that benefit from voice recognition can also be used for second language (L2) pronunciation as well. Multiple-choice questions, true/false, matching, fill in the blanks, multiple answers, and multiple dropdowns are examples of CALL tutorials. Because no human interaction is needed for these types of exercises and the answers are limited in that a preprogrammed answer key can be created, students are able to receive immediate feedback. Explanations for the correct answers can be provided as well, thereby, giving immediate feedback for students.

Many free websites and platforms allow teachers to create these exercises. For example, *Hot Potatoes* (<http://hotpot.uvic.ca/>) and *Quia* (<http://www.quia.com/>) are two examples of these free tools. Moreover, online platforms, such as *Canvas by Instructure* (<http://www.instructure.com/>) and *Blackboard Learning System* (<http://www.blackboard.com/>) are used by many K–12 and higher education institutions and include these tools within the LMS. According to the latest update on *Instructure's* website, *Canvas* is used by over 400 colleges, universities, and school districts throughout the U.S. ("About Us," n.d.).

iCALL is also a CALL Tutorial, but it is different in terms of the type of feedback

students receive. iCALL systems provide the students with *intelligent feedback*.

Intelligent feedback is defined as feedback that is adapted based on the learner corpus.

The responsiveness of the feedback system allows learners to experience an individualized learning experience.

In iCALL, the types of mistakes students make are compiled, and this equips the iCALL systems with the information on what possible mistakes the learners could make in the future. Having that information, the iCALL system gives individualized preemptive feedback to each student. Three iCALL systems that have been fully implemented so far are E-Tutor for German, *Tagarela* for Portuguese, and *Robo-Sensei* for Japanese (Blake, 2011).

Social Computing

Social computing is an umbrella term that Blake (2011) uses for computer mediated communication (CMC) tools. CMC tools require students to interact with one another, either synchronously or asynchronously, to negotiate meaning, complete a task, or reflect on a topic.

Synchronous CMC tools allow instant texting or video calling. *Skype*, *Facebook*, and *Facetime* are examples of CMC tools. Also, the conference tool on *Canvas* (i.e., the LMS used in the current study) allows the instructors and students to communicate synchronously in real-time is a CMC tool. Asynchronous CMC tools also require students to work together, but they do not involve instant messaging or video calling. Some examples of asynchronous CMC tools are wikis, blogs, and discussion forums.

Online Gaming

Online games differ in the way they are structured. While games like *Mentira* (Sykes, 2010) are created solely for the purpose of language learning, massive multiplayer online role playing games (MMORPGs) such as *Guild Wars 2* or *World of Warcraft* are designed solely for commercial purposes, but can be beneficial for language learning (Dixon, 2014; Peterson, 2011).

Online games are *designed experiences* with defined rules and goals (Squire, 2006, as cited in Blake, 2011), and players in these games cooperate and negotiate meaning through instant messaging or audio tools provided in the game to complete the common goals following the rules. An overwhelming amount of evidence has been provided that online games, whether created for educational purposes or not, help L2 learners improve their language skills through negotiation of meaning, problem solving, feedback, and the freedom to fail (Dixon, 2014).

Curricular Issues

There are two prominent reasons that many undergraduate students experience hybrid language learning while pursuing their careers at higher education institutions. First, because of the budget cuts that resulted from the recent economic decline, many institutions across the U.S. began offering language classes in hybrid or fully online formats in order to avoid terminating the foreign language (FL) programs entirely and to save money while still offering these language classes (Thoms, 2012). Second, the number of enrollments in higher education has increased and is estimated to increase 13% between 2009 and 2020 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011, as cited in Thoms, 2012). Hypothetically, hybrid methodology could allow for larger class

enrollments. For example, rather than a class of 30 students in a f2f format meeting four times a week, a hybrid course could have 60 students, with two groups of 30 students meeting twice a week plus participating in online activities. Therefore, hybrid courses are offered at many higher education institutions in the U.S. in order to meet the demands of both students in foreign language classes and the administration.

Thoms (2012) stated that because of “the increasing number of hybrid and online courses along with the overall projected increase in student population at the postsecondary level, publishers have begun to craft FL textbooks in such a way that content can be easily delivered in a number of different formats.” However, in practice it is difficult to determine if the increase in the number of hybrid classes drives the development of online components or if the availability of robust online components drives the development of hybrid courses. The online components usually include exercises that students can do on their own and receive feedback immediately after submitting their answers. They also provide aural input, which may include listening to native speakers read passages from the textbook or interacting in conversations.

Although hybrid courses were offered originally as a budgetary solution to offer language classes to more students without an increase in costs, recent research studies report that hybrid language classes are at least as good as face-to-face (f2f) classes when offered in a pedagogically sound manner (Rubio & Thoms, 2012). There are several important points that need to be kept in mind in the design process in order to construct a pedagogically sound hybrid course.

Pedagogical Issues

The process of course design begins with defining and understanding context (Christison & Murray, 2014). There are two contextual components for hybrid courses—the setting for the f2f portion of the class and the setting for the online portion of the class (M.A. Christison, personal communication, March 31, 2014). The online environment is known as the learning management system (LMS), and it plays a crucial role in understanding contextual issues that may affect learning in a hybrid course. In the process of language course design, it also is important for the course designer to articulate his or her beliefs about language learning and teaching to understand how they may affect the design of the course. As a course designer, I recognize that the process of course design is iterative in nature; however, I will introduce the key elements in course design in a linear approach simply as a way of outlining the different components that must be addressed to resolve pedagogical issues.

Defining goals and objectives for a course is an obvious place to begin the process of course design, particularly for a new course, such as a hybrid course. Graves (2000) uses the analogy of a *journey* to describe goals and objectives. She says, “. . . the destination is the *goal*; the journey is the course. The *objectives* are the different points you pass through on the journey to the destination” (p. 75). In other words, we should answer the question, “what do we want our students to be able to do by the end of the course?” This should be done before designing the course materials, selecting a book for the course, or creating instructional tasks.

Foreign language programs in the U.S. usually follow the guidelines created by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). ACTFL guidelines

define what students are able to do with the language “...across five ranges of performance (Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Superior, and Distinguished) in three modes of communication (Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational) and according to certain language features” (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, 2012). However, curriculum design for English as a second language (ESL) programs does not generally follow ACTFL guidelines. The goals and objectives for individual ESL programs, particularly academic programs, may vary depending on what the program or institution wants to achieve through the ESL classes they offer. For example, in the ESL program at the university where the research for the current study is taking place, the ESL program offers classes that focus on separate aspects of the language (e.g., grammar, academic writing, or culture). Therefore, the course objectives are focused on the specific skills or aspects of the language that are present in the individual courses.

After the goals and objectives have been defined, it should then be decided which parts of the hybrid class should be delivered online and which ones should be delivered f2f. Based on the hybrid classes designed at several universities that were funded by the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT), Young and Pettigrew (2012) stated that the f2f components of the hybrid classes focused on speaking skills, which allowed students to engage in meaningful activities by interacting with one another while the online components prepared the students for the upcoming f2f days by allowing them to build their grammar skills and vocabulary knowledge.

The distinction between the online and f2f instructional components can be explained by considering four factors that are said to be crucial in second language acquisition (SLA): input, output, interaction, and feedback (Rubio and Thoms, 2012). The

instructional components that do not require human interaction are moved online; nevertheless, the two components (the online and the f2f) are interrelated. The online component prepares the students for the f2f component of the course and vice versa.

Stracke (2007) investigated the reasons why three students dropped out of hybrid French and Spanish undergraduate classes offered at a university in Germany. Stracke (2007) found three important reasons that caused these students to drop out of their courses: lack of connection between the f2f and the online component of the hybrid course, lack of paper based reading and writing material, and the rejection of computers as a medium of language learning. Even though the number of dropouts was very small, it still shows us that it is important to keep in mind that the connection between the f2f days and online components should be obvious, that students still want paper-based materials for reading and writing in addition to the online reading and writing assignments, and that providing tutorials and other types of opportunities for learners throughout the process of their online instruction will help them see the computer as aids and support in their language learning process.

Goertler (2011) shared the experience one university had when it began offering hybrid language classes for the first time. She recommended that every language program ponder on three key points when designing hybrid courses. First, she stressed the importance of developing smooth transitions between the f2f component and the online component of a class; students should not see the online component as merely busywork. The online component should complement the f2f component in a pedagogically appropriate manner. Second, she stated that it is not always easy to decide how to present an activity to the students, even though it could be easily decided whether or not the

activities should be completed online or f2f. Course designers must decide if the students should work together f2f and online or interact only online. Perhaps it would be better if students collaborated on an assignment online using asynchronous communication tools such as Google Docs or Ether Pad. Third, she argued that teachers should always keep in mind what the goals of language classes are in order not to be derailed during the design process. She also added that hybrid courses may embrace other educational values as well as the content of a course, such as developing computer literacy, time management skills, lifelong learning habits, and self-responsibility.

Individual differences should also be considered (Goertler, 2011), and teachers should focus on how the language-learning environments impact the students. It is important to remember that each student is a unique individual. Students differ in their ages, personalities, levels of motivation, aptitude, basic IQ, learning style preferences, as well as in their abilities to use learning strategies to assist them in their learning; consequently, accounting for individual differences is an important component of hybrid course design, just as it is with the design of f2f courses.

One of the personality factors considered to be crucial in hybrid language classes is conscientiousness, which is defined as “being thorough and assiduous” in *The American Heritage Dictionary of English Language*. Because students in hybrid classes have more autonomy in their own learning than they do in f2f environments, they also need to develop conscientiousness about their learning process. In traditional f2f classes, the learning process is most often directed by the teacher, at least initially. The teacher often assumes more responsibility than the students in that he/she decides how much time is needed on a particular activity, what students do next, with whom the students work, and

so on. However, in hybrid classes, students take more responsibility and make some of these decisions themselves. They need to manage their own schedule, decide how much time they need to spend on each part, assess their own learning through the online exercises provided, and ensure that the online component, which usually prepares students for the f2f days, is completed before meeting with the instructor and the other classmates.

Arispe and Blake's (2012) study provided evidence that conscientiousness is an important personality factor that affects students' success in hybrid language classes. They had 64 subjects who were enrolled in different levels of hybrid Spanish classes at a research university in California, and their results revealed that students' final grades had a positive correlation with how conscientious the students were. Therefore, it is a good idea for the course designer to make a needs analysis tool at the beginning of the semester to find out if the students are ready to take responsibility for their own learning and make appropriate adjustments in the course design based on the readiness of the learners.

Chapelle and Heift (2009) investigated how field independence and dependence (FID) affect how students interact with CALL environments. In their study, field dependence refers to the learning style when learners prefer to work with others in the learning environment while field independence refers to the trait of learners who prefer to work on their own. The data was collected from 50 first-year German students. Learners were given access to E-Tutor, a CALL program for German, for a semester and then completed a 30-item questionnaire. Their results were inconclusive because the tool they used to measure FID was unreliable. However, they were able to do an in-depth analysis of 5 of the questions in the questionnaire and found out that field dependent learners

depended on outside help even when it comes from the computer.

Murray and Christison (2011) discussed the use of the Gradual Release Learning Model with language learners. This model was originally proposed by Pearson and Gallagher (1983). According to this model, learning activities should be sequenced based on how much control students are given in each activity. Activities that involve teacher control decrease through time while more control is given to the students as they develop their learning skills.

This model frames the design of hybrid courses because hybrid courses release control to the students as they choose when to study, where to study, how much time to spend on each activity, and what sources to use while studying. This in turn might increase the motivation of students. Kohn (1999) defines three C's essential to intrinsic motivation: collaboration, content, and choice. In a nutshell, *collaboration* refers to creating an environment where employees can work together as team members; *content* relates to understanding how any specific job adds value and contributes to the achievement of organizational objectives, and *choice* refers to how much freedom employees are given and how much they are involved in decision making situations. Applying Kohn's (1999) model to the design of hybrid courses, one can say that *choice* is an essential component of hybrid courses, which can motivate students by allowing them to make decisions regarding their own learning.

Every course design process should be systematic and carefully implemented; however, hybrid course design requires that designers consider factors that are related to choice and are beyond the scope of f2f courses. Therefore, every institution planning to offer hybrid courses should provide the course designers with the resources and the time

they need to design and plan for hybrid courses (e.g., course release, course design workshops, graduate teaching assistants).

Perceptual Issues

Foreign language teachers might think that all students in hybrid courses are “digital natives” and will succeed in the hybrid courses. However, teachers’ perceptions of hybrid courses may not always match with those of the students. Based on a myriad of empirical studies in educational psychology, Gabillion (2012) reported that discrepancies between teachers’ beliefs and students’ beliefs affect the learning process in a negative way. As mentioned earlier, Stracke (2007) found out that the lack of having paper-based reading and writing tasks and the rejection of computers as a medium of language learning were among the reasons that some students dropped out of their hybrid courses. These findings indicate that not every student perceives the hybrid courses through the eyes of a “digital native.” To resolve these perceptual issues teachers must develop systematic approaches for determining students’ comfort levels with the LMS and create online tools for learners to improve their skills and confidence levels.

SLA Theories and Hybrid Courses

CALL tutorials, social computing, and online games can be seen as effective because they are grounded in a number of theoretical concepts that support second language acquisition. In this section, CALL tutorials and social computing will be discussed because they are seen as common tools for hybrid courses. Although online gaming may be useful in supporting second language acquisition, it is not seen as an important tool in hybrid courses and, as such, is beyond the scope of this current research study.

Krashen (1982) stated that we acquire a language in an amazingly simple way: by

understanding the messages in that language. He argues that we make gains in a second or foreign language not because we consciously practice language structures before but because we are exposed to comprehensible input. According to Krashen, the causal factor in the acquisition process is the “comprehensible input.” Getting input in the online environment that learners understand is crucial regardless of how the new language is processed (i.e., consciously or subconsciously).

CALL tutorials can provide comprehensible input both in written and aural formats. In hybrid courses, it is likely that there is a smaller amount of oral/aural input than in f2f classes except when the online component of the course includes the use of tools that allow for ample amounts of listening. The written input is always ample in that students read extensively in order to complete tasks (e.g., instructions written by the teacher, the task itself, comments written by other classmates in online discussions, feedback received from the teacher or a peer).

Hybrid courses must be carefully designed so that there is not an imbalance in the amount of written and aural input that might ultimately cause differences in student performances in the development of the four skills, which are reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Adair-Hauck, Willingham-McLain, and Youngs (1999) investigated whether technology-enhanced language learning has an effect on students’ performance in the four skills. Participants were 33 college level second semester French students. The treatment group met with the instructor 3 times a week, and they studied online for 1 day. The control group met with the instructor for all 4 days. The same instructor taught both classes, and the same textbook was used for both classes. The findings revealed that the students in the treatment group performed as well as the control group in listening and

speaking, but better on reading and writing. This learner profile provides support for the fact that a hybrid course can be at least as effective if not more effective than a traditional f2f class.

That the acquisition of L2 grammar follows a predictable pattern has been investigated in SLA for a long time. Dulay and Burt (1973) studied the acquisition of L2 English morphemes and found that the accuracy of the use of a morpheme indicates its order of acquisition: the more accurately a morpheme is used, the earlier it is acquired. Krashen (1982), in his Monitor Model, also argued that learners pass through predictable stages when acquiring the syntax of an L2, and deliberate teaching of grammar cannot change the order of acquisition. Pienemann (2005), based on the earlier studies on order of acquisition (see Clahsen, 1984; Dulay & Burt, 1973; Krashen, 1982; Meisel et al., 1981; Pienemann & Johnston, 1987, as cited in Pienemann & Keßler, 2012) proposed Processability Theory in which he argued that “at any stage of development, the learner can process only those L2 linguistics forms which the current state of the language processor can handle” (Pienemann & Keßler, 2012, p. 228). This argument in turn also means that certain features or morphemes in a language are mastered before other features or morphemes (i.e., 3rd person singular –s is acquired after plurals). Processability Theory (PT) provides support for iCALL systems. As mentioned earlier, iCALL systems allow learners to have an individualized experience of language learning because it can give individualized feedback based on the learner corpora. Therefore, material can also be sequenced in accordance with the learners’ current capabilities and readiness to process different aspects of the language.

The effectiveness of the CMC tools used in hybrid courses can be explained from an

interactionist perspective. Goertler (2012) summarized interactionist theory by stating that interaction is key to learning a language because the input is processed for comprehension, which then allows for the learner to notice the difference between the target language and their interlanguage. She continued by stating that language learners form hypotheses about the target language, and they can test these hypotheses during output or production and with the feedback received from the interlocutor. If the input is comprehended, it would provide positive feedback on the hypotheses; if the input is not comprehended, then it would lead to noticing the differences between the target language and the interlanguage. From these perspectives, “CMC allows for noticing, feedback and negotiation of meaning, and thereby enhances language learning” (Goertler, 2012, p. 34). Furthermore, because the online discussions are slow in that the responses are in a written format, it also allows for noticing and subsequent learning (Ortega, 1997, as cited in Goertler, 2012).

Boyd (2008) also did a study on students’ perceptions of online and hybrid first year compositions, and the results indicated that the students enjoyed the discussion board activities more than all other activities. Discussion boards not only allow learners to express their opinions, but they also engage learners in discussions with their peers’ opinions. Moreover, even if the types of activities students do online do not require interaction with peers or the teacher, the activities done on f2f days can still provide the students with opportunities to interact with one another or the teacher. The types of activities that are done online and in f2f contexts highly depend on the type of hybrid course being taught as well as the objectives of the course.

Krashen (1982) stated that multiple variables affect success in second language

acquisition. He argued that learners with high motivation, high self-confidence, and low anxiety do better in second language acquisition. Carefully designed hybrid courses have the potential to create these conditions for language learners.

In hybrid courses students are able to work at their own pace when studying online. This lowers their anxiety because they do not feel pressured by time limits or their peers. Also, online exercises do not have a time limit, give prompt feedback to learners, and can be taken multiple times, thereby reducing the anxiety of students.

Sagarra and Zapata (2008) investigated the impact of an online workbook on students' attitudes toward this online tool. The study lasted 2 semesters and included 245 participants. The participants were enrolled in different sections of two consecutive Spanish classes. The study included a 4-hour instructional treatment followed by one set of online homework assignments per week. The data were collected through a survey, which was given to the students after two semesters of exposure to the online workbook, and two language assessment tools. The results of the survey were compared to the two language assessment tasks. Their results indicated that the online workbook caused an increase in students' knowledge of grammar and was perceived by the students as an effective tool because it was user-friendly, accessible, and gave instant feedback. Students stated that there was a direct relationship between the face-to-face component of the day and the online homework, which they found useful. They also liked being able to take a quiz multiple times, receive instant feedback, work at their own pace, and have access to the answers. Because of the flexibility that hybrid courses offer, students appreciate them, and it also seems that they help students lower the level of anxiety they experience in language learning.

Moreover, hybrid courses can motivate students in ways f2f classes cannot.

Motivation is closely related to learner autonomy. Ducate, Lomicka, and Lord (2012) suggested that learner autonomy and motivation affect each other. The more students assume control over their own learning, the more motivated they are to learn. Hybrid courses require that students accept responsibility for their own learning, which in turn allows them to have autonomy in the learning process.

Murray (1999) researched the perceptions of 23 French second language learners as they worked with an interactive video on their own for between 2 and 3 months. The learners were required to keep diaries and answer questions, which helped them reflect on their perceptions of the online tool they used, and two in-depth interviews were conducted as well. Murray's study revealed that learner autonomy was the most salient feature of the learners' experiences. Participants enjoyed being able to work at their own pace and also expressed less anxiety than they would have in a f2f class. This finding is also supported by Sagarra and Zapata's (2008) study mentioned earlier.

The value of CMC with peers also finds support within the framework of Sociocultural Theory. According to Sociocultural Theory (Lantolf, 2000), learning is collaborative and takes place when human beings interact with each other in social settings. Because CMC allows for interaction between peers, it is helpful in terms of language socialization. However, "sociocultural theory puts more emphasis on expert-novice interaction" as one of the key concepts in Sociocultural Theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD; Goertler, 2012, p. 34). ZPD is the distance between what learners are able to do on their own and what they are able to do with the help of their peers; in other words, people can help each other go beyond the boundaries of their own

capabilities when working together. Pica (1996) conducted a study that was designed to find whether interactions among language learners could provide the same benefits as interactions between learners and native speakers. Results indicated that interaction between nonnative speakers can provide the input, feedback, and output needs L2 learners have even though it does not provide as much modified input and feedback as interaction with native speakers provides.

Teaching Grammar

Hybrid courses are challenging because of their different format. However, familiarizing oneself with the format while designing a hybrid course is not enough; one should also become educated about the content of the course. Therefore, as ESL 1040 is a grammar course, a section on teaching grammar is included in this chapter. This section summarizes some of the current issues in the teaching of grammar and shapes my views on teaching grammar.

Even though everyone has an idea of what grammar teaching is, giving a definition of it is difficult as it can be achieved in several ways depending on teachers' beliefs.

Grammar can be taught through different approaches: explicitly (by giving grammar rules through deductive or inductive instruction) or through corrective feedback (noticing the differences between the target language form and the interlanguage based on feedback).

Ellis (2006) gave the following broad definition for teaching grammar:

Grammar teaching involves any instructional technique that draws learners' attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them either to understand it metalinguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalize it. (p. 84)

Earlier in the field, teaching of grammar was controversial because some researchers believed that grammar instruction had no effect on learners' interlanguage development

as learners had a built-in syllabus for learning grammar, and all they needed was comprehensible input and motivation (Krashen, 1982). However, later research indicated that acquisition of grammar followed the same patterns both in instructed and naturalistic learning environments, but grammar instruction helped learners achieve higher proficiency (see Ellis, 2001 and Norris & Ortega, 2000 for a summary of the research).

Most of the students enrolled in ESL 1040 are higher level proficiency students, and research supports the fact that these L2 users can benefit from grammatical instruction, then the next obvious questions is: What grammatical structures should be taught? Krashen (1982) argued that learners are only capable of learning a few grammatical structures that are relatively simple in their constructions as more complex structures are simply not learnable. However, Green and Hecht (1992), Macrory and Stone (2000), and Hu (2002) as cited in Ellis (2006) provided evidence for the fact that learners are capable of learning complex grammatical structures through instruction. Therefore, I was comfortable including complex grammatical structures such as adjective clauses or noun clauses in the schedule for ESL 1040.

One common approach to determining what structures should be taught is teaching the forms that differ from the learners' first language (L1) because they might have difficulty with those forms. The second approach involves teaching marked forms, such as words with inflectional endings like plurals and the regular past tense in English, rather than unmarked or ordinary forms. L2 learners transfer some structures from their L1; however, we do not know if the differences between the L1 and the target language structures provoke learning difficulties. In some contexts, English learners come from different L1 backgrounds, which makes this approach impractical. Ellis (2006) also

suggested that it is impractical to define structures as marked and unmarked and that more time should be spent on teaching the structures that are found to be difficult for L2 learners. Thus, I decided to cover the structures that are found to be difficult for English academic writers in ESL 1040. Folse (2009) summarized the difficult structures for English academic writers; the structures chosen for ESL 1040 course are based on Folse's (2009) study and are stated in Chapter 3.

The question of when to teach grammar is still debated in the field of SLA. Ellis (2006) discussed two prominent approaches to when to teach grammar. According to the first approach, it is better to teach grammar early in the acquisition process because once wrong habits are formed in the interlanguage, it is possible that these habits might become fossilized. Besides, students are not competent enough in the language to engage in meaning-centered activities early in the language learning process. Therefore, starting grammar teaching early on will give students the necessary tools to process the input better. On the other hand, the second approach argues that grammar should be taught later on because teaching grammar early on might impede the communicative abilities students might otherwise develop through meaning-focused and task-based activities. Moreover, second language research shows that some grammar structures can be learned without explicit grammar instruction (Ellis, 2006).

Another question that has received much attention in the field of SLA is whether to teach grammar explicitly or implicitly. Explicit grammar teaching takes place when grammar rules of a target language are taught, either through a deductive or an inductive approach. In a deductive approach, students are first given a rule of a grammar structure in the target language, and then given the opportunities to practice the rule. On the other

hand, in an inductive approach, students are first given input that has the target grammar structure in it and then asked to discover the rule based on the input they received. Both deductive and inductive approaches are conscious processes in that students end up with a rule at the end, and thus the knowledge students have is explicit. However, implicit grammar teaching takes place when students lack the awareness of what is being taught and focus on the meaning instead. Therefore, implicit knowledge is subconscious and internalized.

Researchers argue that language acquisition is a matter of acquiring implicit knowledge about the target language or converting the explicit knowledge one has into implicit knowledge through *practice* or *noticing*. Knowing that a myriad of SLA studies show that the formal study of grammar is indeed beneficial for language development, Ellis (2006) argued that “irrespective of whether explicit knowledge has any value in and of itself, it may assist language development by facilitating the development of implicit knowledge” because he argues that through noticing the gaps between the target language and the interlanguage, one can convert explicit knowledge into implicit knowledge, which is also known as the *weak-interface position* (p. 96). Moreover, based on the meta-analysis Norris and Ortega (2000) did, it is found that treatments that involved explicit instruction are more effective than treatments that do not include explicit focus. Based on these studies, I did not hesitate to teach English grammar explicitly. However, whether the structure was taught through a deductive or an inductive approach was based on the nature of the structure that was being taught.

Researchers also question whether grammar should be taught separately or be integrated into communicative activities, which came to be known as *focus on formS* and

focus on form approaches. Both approaches emphasize the importance of the mapping between form and meaning: students should be able to make a connection between grammatical forms and the meanings of those forms as they are using them. However, they approach differently how grammar learning takes place. Sheen (2002) discussed these two terms in his article as they are often not used correctly in the literature. Focus on form approach takes the similarities between first language acquisition and second language acquisition as its base and suggests that grammar should be taught through exposure to comprehensible input that arises from the need to use a grammatical structure to communicate. In this approach, it is also acknowledged that the two acquisition processes (i.e., first and second language) are not exactly the same: exposure to input is not enough in second language acquisition and therefore, students' attention should be drawn to the grammatical structures (Sheen, 2002). It is questionable whether the need to use the grammatical structure is predetermined or incidental. Thus, Ellis (2001), categorizes the two as different approaches: *planned focus on form* and *incidental focus on form*.

Focus on formS involves teaching grammar in separate lessons. Focus on formS derives from cognitive processes, which suggests that grammar is a "skill" to be learned. In contrast with focus on form, grammar structures are not taught because there is a need to use them; they are taught because there will be a need to use them as the follow up activities (both communicative and noncommunicative) will provide students with opportunities to use the structures they learned (Sheen, 2002).

According to Ellis (2001), Input Processing (IP) should be placed under the category of focus on formS because learners' attention is focused on preselected linguistic

features. IP is concerned with how learners derive intake from the input they receive. VanPatten (2002) claimed that working memory is limited in capacity and that is why language learners cannot focus on both form and meaning at the same time. Therefore, he stated that “learners process input for meaning first before they process it for form.” (p. 758) As a result, learners process content words, which have the same meaning as the grammatical form, first. For example, in a Turkish sentence such as “Dün git-ti -m → Yesterday go-PAST-I,” learners will focus on the content word “dün” instead of the grammatical morpheme “-ti” attached to the verb to understand that the action took place in the past. Also, he stated that learners have the tendency to mark the first noun they see as the subject of the sentence, and this is the reason why in languages with flexible word order learners tend to mark the first noun as the subject. For example, a Spanish sentence such as “Lo ve Maria” will most probably be processed as “He sees Mary” because the first noun encountered is “lo”. (VanPatten, 2002) Based on these principles, VanPatten suggested that structured input activities be used to change the way learners process input because they eliminate any clues such as content words, word order, and animacy to push the learners to process the target grammatical form.

Which one of the two approaches (i.e., focus on form and focus on formS) is more effective is still debated as researchers have opposing arguments. According to the meta-analysis Norris and Ortega (2000) did, there is no significant difference between the two approaches. However, researchers still argue in favor of one or the other. Long (1988, 1991, as cited in Ellis, 2006) and Doughty (2001) argued in favor of focus on form because they state that interlanguage is developed best through implicit knowledge, which results from learners dealing with both form and meaning at the same time as they

are engaged in meaningful activities. However, DeKeyser (1988, as cited in Ellis 2006), for example, argued that grammar learning takes place as a result of automatization of explicit knowledge. Grammar structures should be taught explicitly and then internalized through tasks that reinforce the form meaning mapping. ESL 1040, as a grammar only course, is based on focus on formS approach; students are taught the structures explicitly and make the form meaning mapping through activities that reinforce it.

As discussed in this section, research on grammar teaching has been controversial with a myriad of opposing hypotheses and research findings. However, researchers agree on one aspect of grammar teaching: zero grammar approach does not work; students should be taught grammar. The debate over how grammar should be taught still continues.

The literature review presented in this chapter focuses on issues regarding hybrid courses, how hybrid courses are grounded in SLA theory, student and teacher perceptions of hybrid courses, and grammar teaching. All of these factors must be considered in the design of the ESL 1040 course and for the design for my action research project.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines a plan for the methodology for the current study. The quasi-experimental research design is presented and explained. The design of the f2f and hybrid courses also plays a significant role in the methodology, so the overall design of the course in terms of content is also presented. The chapter provides information about the participants, data collection tools and procedures, and gives a brief overview of the intended data analysis methods that are used for the quantitative and qualitative data.

Research Design

This is an action research project. The purpose of action research, as defined in Isaac and Michaels (1981), is to develop new skills or approaches with direct application to the classroom. Action research is done by teachers in their own classrooms to answer questions directly related to teaching and learning in their own classrooms. According to Nunan and Bailey (2009), action research is an iterative process that involves (1) identifying research questions, 2) acting on the research questions by creating an action plan, 3) carrying out the plan, 4) analyzing the results of the plan, 5) reflecting on the results, and 6) repeating these steps again. To this end, the aim of this study is to answer the research questions in order to improve and inform instruction in ESL 1040 in both the f2f and hybrid sections of the course. As the researcher, I am also the teacher; consequently, the research questions are directly related to the classrooms in which I am

teaching. The outcomes are intended to inform instruction in ESL 1040. The current study focuses on the first cycle of action research, but if the researcher is assigned to teach ESL 1040 again, an additional cycle could be started.

One criticism of action research designs from individuals who hold mostly positivist and postpositivist views about research is that they are believed to lack external validity (Hatch, 2002). The reason for this point of view is because action research is highly contextualized and also investigates a restricted population (Isaac and Michaels, 1981). It is important to remember that because of the nature of action research (i.e., conducted by teachers in their own classrooms), the study is not intended to be generalizable to all language learners; however, it is generalizable to the students who can claim membership in the group (i.e., students who are enrolled in *ESL 1040 English Grammar and Editing for Non-native Speakers of English* classes at the University in which the current study is being conducted).

Before the design of this study is explained in detail, some terminology needs to be clarified. For this research study, the definition by Laster et al. (2005) is used to define hybrid courses: hybrid courses are “courses that integrate online with traditional face-to-face (f2f) class activities in a planned, pedagogically valuable manner, and where a portion of f2f time is replaced by online activity.”

The construct being measured (i.e., students’ knowledge of grammar and editing) also needs to be clarified. The grammatical structures on which the students in ESL 1040 are being assessed are the following: nouns, articles, verb tenses, prepositions, passive voice, participial adjectives, subject verb agreement, modals, gerunds and infinitives, adjective clauses, adverb clauses, noun clauses, conditionals, run-ons, fragments, and comma

splices. These structures are considered to be the most problematic structures for English academic writers (Folse, 2009); therefore, they are integrated into the syllabus of the ESL 1040 class by instructors in the ESL program.

Moreover, knowledge of editing must be defined in the context of this research study because it can be perceived in several different ways. Editing can be accomplished at the level of a sentence, paragraph, or essay. It can also be conceptualized in different ways in terms of the type of editing. For example, it can be the type of editing one does to revise one's own writing, or it can be editing a piece of writing that is written by someone else. Second language (L2) writers can also edit their own writing based on teacher feedback, or they can edit grammar mistakes at the sentence or discourse level. In the context of this research study, editing is defined as correcting grammar errors in paragraphs at the sentence and discourse level.

As shown in Figure 3.1, the quantitative part of this research aims to find out whether type of instruction (i.e., hybrid vs. f2f) has an effect on ESL 1040 students' performance on the posttest. The students will take the posttest at the end of the semester. The posttest measures students' knowledge of English grammar and editing skills. Students were also given a pretest at the beginning of instruction (see Figure 3.1). The pretest is discussed in detail in the *Data Collection* section in this chapter.

This study employed a mixed-methods design because the nature of the study required both qualitative and quantitative data to answer the research questions and reach certain conclusions about hybrid grammar courses. The research design for the quantitative data is quasi-experimental with a pretest-posttest design. The pre- and posttests are designed to measure student performance on English grammar and editing.

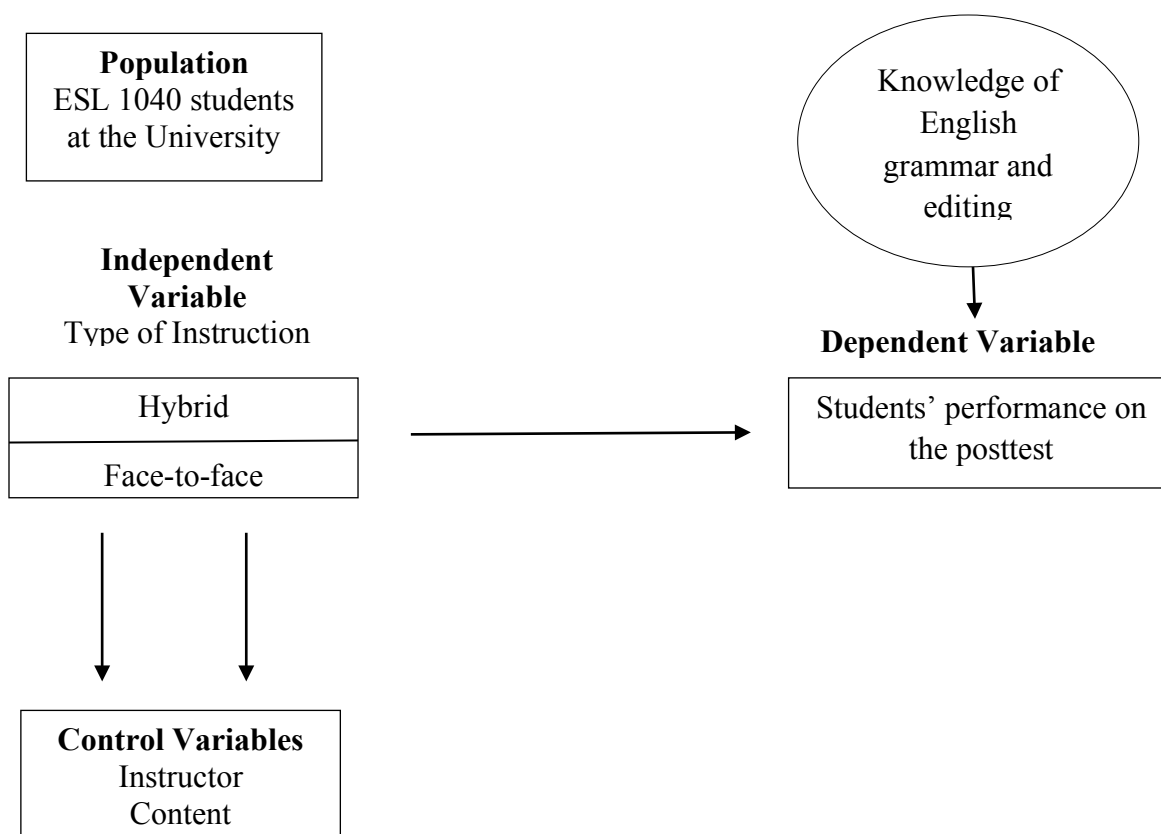


Figure 3.1 Quantitative Research Design

Quasi-experimental research approximates true experiments; however, not every single variable is controlled for in such studies. In this study, the researcher has no control over how students are enrolled in each section of the class, hybrid or f2f. Students enroll in ESL classes based on their own preferences or are assigned based on their schedules. The researcher had no control over some other variables as well, such as participants' native language backgrounds, the other languages they may have studied so far, or how much they study English outside the classroom. However, the pretest will be used as a covariate to determine whether the groups are statistically equivalent based on their knowledge of grammar and editing skills prior to the treatment (i.e., the instruction).

Two of the potential extraneous variables were controlled for in this study: instructor

variable and the content taught in both classes. The researcher herself is the instructor of both sections of the class, the f2f and the hybrid course. It is important to control the instructor variable as each instructor is unique in the way he or she teaches, and teachers can affect learner outcomes. Even though individual sections of the same course use the same evaluation criteria, assessment tools, and materials, learner outcomes may differ because of the teacher. Also, each section was taught the same content (see Course Design) in the same order, sequence, and time frame. However, the classroom activities differed somewhat depending on the type of instruction (i.e., f2f or online). Moreover, the intended workload and the anticipated time commitment for each class was meant to be equal; however, the time students might spend on various tasks outside of class could not be controlled for in either the f2f or hybrid section because the researcher had no control over how much time the students in each class might devote to language study outside the classroom, including online time spent in the online environment.

The qualitative data focused on collecting data to understand the perceptions of the students and the instructor on teaching and learning in hybrid versus f2f English grammar courses. Qualitative data were intended to provide input for improving the design of the hybrid ESL 1040 course. The quantitative part of the research was used to answer the questions about effectiveness and learning outcomes (i.e., Which section of the ESL 1040 course made the most progress in helping students develop English grammar and editing skills?).

Participants

Participants in this study are the students enrolled in two different sections (i.e., one f2f and one hybrid) of *ESL 1040 English Grammar and Editing for Non-native Speakers of English* course in a semester at the University of Utah and the instructor of these two sections, who is the researcher herself. Students, as stated in the research design section, were enrolled in these two sections based on their own preferences or were assigned to a section by their advisor. The instructor for both sections was the same for two main reasons. First, as this is an action research project, the researcher is the teacher and is involved in the study to critique and improve her own teaching. Second, as the design is quasi-experimental, it is necessary to control the instructor variable in the study.

Participants are all international students who are nonnative speakers of English. Even though they were all placed in ESL 1040 based on a writing placement exam, their proficiency level in English may also vary. The individuals who place students in the courses after the placement exam try to evenly distribute students equally into sections. The placement procedure for students into the two sections is about equal with 17 enrolled in the hybrid section while 25 of them were enrolled in the f2f section. However, the pretest and posttest data were collected from 13 students in the hybrid section and 19 in the f2f section because some of the students did not take the needs analysis (pretest) test at the beginning of the semester as they were not registered for the course yet or were absent on the day the test was administered. The researcher also collected information on native language background, nationality, age, and gender, but these variables are not part of the research design. The only criterion for participation was enrollment in f2f or hybrid sections of the course.

The researcher is also a participant in this study by being the instructor for both sections of the course. To this end, this research study was aligned with the researcher's beliefs about the nature of reality, what can be known and how that knowledge can be gained. This research study followed a constructivist design because the researcher believes that understanding of knowledge is not universal but is constructed through "multiple realities." Knowledge is coconstructed through interactions with the researcher and the participants (Hatch, 2002, p. 13). Therefore, in order to answer the research questions about the effectiveness of f2f versus hybrid courses, both the instructor and the students had to be involved in the research.

Course Design

ESL 1040 is the first course of a sequence of L2 writing courses that satisfy the writing requirement for international students at one university at the 1000-level (i.e., lower division courses). Its main focus is on improving students' knowledge of English grammar and paragraph-level writing and editing skills and helping them succeed in the other L2 writing courses in the sequence that focus on composition skills. Students should be able to write grammatically correct sentences and paragraphs using academic language and edit paragraph length compositions by the end of this course.

This course is a requirement for international students who are nonnative speakers of English. As L2 academic writers, they will be required to write academic papers as they continue with their academic careers at the university. Therefore, they have to improve their writing skills to be successful in their majors and to this end, they need to improve their knowledge of English grammar and academic writing skills, and they also need to learn more about academic language.

Grammatical structures selected for the course were taught in context. The book *Grammar in Context* written by Elbaum (2010) was the main textbook used in this class in both the f2f and hybrid sections. The topics in the book ranged from American presidents, Hollywood, caring for children, consumer warnings, and the possible disasters and tragedies to coming to America. The instructor tried to use interesting texts related to those topics to help motivate the students and help them understand the grammatical structures in context because teaching grammar using discrete sentences that have no relation to a context has not been helpful for students in making form-meaning connections. Students need to make connections between the grammatical structures and the contexts in which they are used (Celce-Murcia, 2002).

For the hybrid section of the course, the components that did not need human interaction were moved online. Therefore, one-third of the class was f2f in order to provide students with opportunities to interact with one another while two-thirds of the class was implemented online through Canvas.

The learning objectives were the same for each section of the course, the hybrid and the f2f. The same textbook was used, the same grammatical structures were targeted, and grammar was taught in context in both classes. However, due to the difference in instruction type, the class activities differed. Table. 3.1 compares and contrasts both sections of ESL 1040 in terms of class activities.

Data Collection Tools

Two different types of data collection tools were used in this study—tools for collecting quantitative data and qualitative data.

Table 3.1 A comparison of class activities

F2F	Hybrid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In-class lectures are presented to cover the topics on grammar and paragraph-level writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Online video lectures are presented to cover the topics on grammar and paragraph-level writing. Students may watch the video lectures as often as they wish.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students are engaged in individual, group, or pair activities to practice the topic that has been covered in class time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ While watching the online lectures, students are asked to take some online quizzes to practice the topic they are studying. There is no time limit for these practice quizzes. Students have two opportunities to take the same quiz. The aim is for them to practice the topic. Each time they take the quiz, it will be graded online, and they will get immediate feedback. ▪ Students are also engaged in group or pair activities during the f2f component of the class to practice the topics that are covered in that week's module.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At the end of each class, students will be given online assignments on Canvas. There is a due date, but there is no time limit for these assignments. Some of the assignments are graded by Canvas while some are graded by the instructor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At the end of each online lecture, students will be given online assignments on Canvas. There is a due date, but there is no time limit for these assignments. Some of the assignments are graded by Canvas while some are graded by the instructor.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students are expected to read chapters or texts from their textbooks to help them better understand the grammar principles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students are expected to read chapters or texts from their textbooks to help them better understand the grammar principles.

Quantitative Data

Data for quantitative analysis came from the pretest (needs analysis) and the posttest (final exam) that students took as part of the class requirements. Students in the hybrid section also completed a questionnaire specifically designed for the hybrid ESL 1040 course. In addition, students in both sections were asked to complete the standard end of term evaluations sent by the University.

The pretest and the posttest, which are essentially the same test, were given to the students in both classes at the beginning and end of the semester (see Appendix A). The test assessed students' knowledge of English grammar and editing. Bachman and Palmer (2010) argued that the test tasks should resemble the characteristics of the tasks students are supposed to complete in the target language use domain. The target language use domain for ESL 1040 students is both the ESL 1040 class and the classes that require them to write papers. To this end, the test was designed as an editing type of test. There were 10 paragraphs in the test. The paragraphs contained potential errors. Each potential error was numbered and written in boldface type. If the sentences were correct, students marked (a) no change. If the sentences were not correct, they chose among b, c, or d to correct the error.

The pre- and posttests had been piloted in one f2f section of ESL 1040 students in a previous semester and used as a final exam to measure students' knowledge of English grammar and editing. The test seemed to have good construct validity (i.e., it is testing knowledge of grammatical structures and academic writing skills on which the instruction was focused). It was designed using the framework Bachman and Palmer (2010) provided for high-stakes exams. In addition, the students who were getting good

grades in the course were receiving high scores on this test while students who were not very successful with the course assessments were not as successful on the test either.

A Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the scores on the final exam and student's letter grade for the course. There was a positive correlation between the two variables ($r = 0.936$); however, the results were not significant. The fact that the results are not significant may be attributed to the number of participants ($n = 14$). A Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was again computed to assess if the test was reliable. The pre- and posttests had a high reliability as measured by Pearson r with a split half design ($r = 0.78$).

Under the conditions this study was conducted, using the same test as both a pretest and a posttest did not jeopardize the internal validity of this study. First, creating a new posttest could raise the question of whether these two tests would be the same in terms of their difficulty level and the range of vocabulary used in the paragraphs students read in both tests. Second, because there was a long period of time, approximately 15 weeks, between the pretest and the posttest, the pretest could not easily have an effect on students' performance on the posttest. No mention was made of a posttest at the time students took the pretest, so students had no idea they would even see the exam again. Moreover, in-class activities already included editing exercises like the ones in the pretest and the posttest, which means the students would be used to taking such editing tests even though they were not given the pretest. Therefore, *practice effect* is not considered as an extraneous variable in this study.

The hybrid course was given a questionnaire prepared by the researcher while the students in the f2f section only completed the standard end of semester student

evaluations. The questionnaire given to the hybrid section consisted of four parts (see Appendix B for the questionnaire). The first part was about personal information relevant to the study. The second part was about what students found useful and not useful about the class, while the third part aimed to find out how their participation in the class was and how responsible they were as students. The second part of the questionnaire was used as input to improve the design of the ESL 1040 class, while the third part was used in order to see whether the fact that some of the students did not find the course beneficial is because they were not responsible enough for their own learning. The fourth part is discussed in the next section because it is qualitative.

Qualitative Data

Four different methods were used to gather qualitative data to answer the research questions regarding the student and teacher perceptions of hybrid language teaching and learning. First, the two open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire that students in the hybrid section filed out gathered qualitative data from the students about their perceptions of the course. Second, a focus group was conducted with the hybrid class (see Appendix C for the focus group questions). One f2f class session was devoted to the focus group, and it was led by a professional from the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence at the University. The researcher did not conduct the focus group because she did not want to exert undue influence on the results. It was of high importance that learners participated in the focus group in a comfortable environment so that they could express their opinions freely. It would be difficult to create a comfortable environment if the instructor were the one asking questions about a class that she had taught herself. Third, the end of semester evaluation questionnaires sent by the University included two

open-ended questions: one on the effectiveness of the course and one on the effectiveness of the instructor. This questionnaire was filled out by both the students in the f2f and hybrid sections. The researcher/instructor also kept a teaching journal to reflect on perceptions of hybrid and f2f English grammar teaching. The researcher answered a set of questions, which can be found in Appendix D, after each class time and online module completed by students on Canvas.

Data Analysis

A simple *t* test was used to determine if there were differences between the two groups (i.e., the f2f and the hybrid) on the pretest. The *t* test assessed whether the means of two groups were statistically different from each other. If there are significant differences on the scores on pretest, the pretest will be used as a covariate.

Qualitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Data from the focus groups and teacher journals were analyzed by mining the data for themes that emerged. Data were analyzed using an Excel spreadsheet.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Both qualitative (i.e., the questionnaire, the focus group, end of semester evaluations, and teaching journals) and quantitative (i.e., pre- and posttests, the questionnaire, and end of semester evaluations) data were collected to answer the research questions for this action research project. This chapter presents an analysis of the data in two sections: quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative Data

The quantitative data were collected from the pre- and posttests, standard end of semester evaluations that both sections filled out and the questionnaire that the students in the hybrid ESL 1040 course were given.

Pretest

Pre- and posttests were given to students to answer Research Question 1, which asks, “Does hybrid instruction have a positive effect on the development of students’ knowledge of grammar and editing in the ESL 1040 course?” The pretest was given to both groups (i.e., f2f and hybrid) at the beginning of the semester. The aim was to find out whether the two groups differed significantly in terms of their knowledge of English grammar and editing skills before the treatment. Table 4.1 shows the descriptive statistics for both groups. There were 13 participants in the hybrid group and 19 participants in the f2f group. The mean score for the hybrid group was 41.61 while it was 40.10 for the

Table 4.1 Pretest descriptive statistics

Groups	Number of participants	Mean scores	Standard deviation
Hybrid	13	41.6154	10.59511
F2F	19	40.1053	10.79040

hybrid group (the highest possible score was 62). The difference between the standard deviations for both groups was very close: 10.59 for the hybrid group and 10.79 for the f2f group.

Even though the mean scores and the standard deviations were very close to each other, a simple t test was used in order to measure whether the difference between the mean scores was significant. The alpha decision level for this study was set to .05. There was no significant difference between the two groups as measured by the pretest; $t(30) = .392, p = .698$.

Posttest

Fifteen weeks after the pretest, the posttest was given to both groups as a final exam. As seen in Table 4.2, the number of participants is the same as the pretest because the posttest data was collected only from the students who took the pretest. The mean score for the hybrid group was 49.53 while it was 47.57 for the f2f group.

Because the pretest showed that the two groups were not significantly different in terms of their knowledge of English grammar and editing skills prior to treatment, the posttest was analyzed using a t test. However, because of the difference between standard deviations, equal variances were not assumed and the SPSS t test results were interpreted accordingly. The results showed that there was no significant difference between the two

Table 4.2 Posttest descriptive statistics

Groups	Number of participants	Mean scores	Standard deviation
Hybrid	13	49.5385	6.66603
F2F	19	47.5789	9.77705

groups after the treatment; $t(30) = .628, p = .535$.

Figure 4.1 depicts where each group started at the beginning of the course and how much progress they made throughout the course. As seen in the figure, both groups made almost the same amount of progress.

Questionnaire Data

The questionnaire was given to students in the hybrid section on the last day of school in order to answer Research Question 3, “What are learners’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the hybrid ESL 1040 course?” and Research Question 4, “What actions can be taken to improve the design and the effectiveness of the hybrid ESL 1040 course?” Twelve students out of 17 volunteered to fill it out. They took the questionnaire with them and brought it back on the day the final exam (posttest) was given. The questionnaire included two parts: quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative part included three sections: A, B, and C. Section A gathered data about students’ age, language background, hybrid or online course experience, and gender; section B gathered data about how students perceived the hybrid format, while section C was about how students interacted with the hybrid format. The qualitative part included two open ended questions and is presented later in the chapter.

In section A, students gave background information about themselves. All of the students were male, and 91.7% were between the ages of 18–22 while 8.3% were

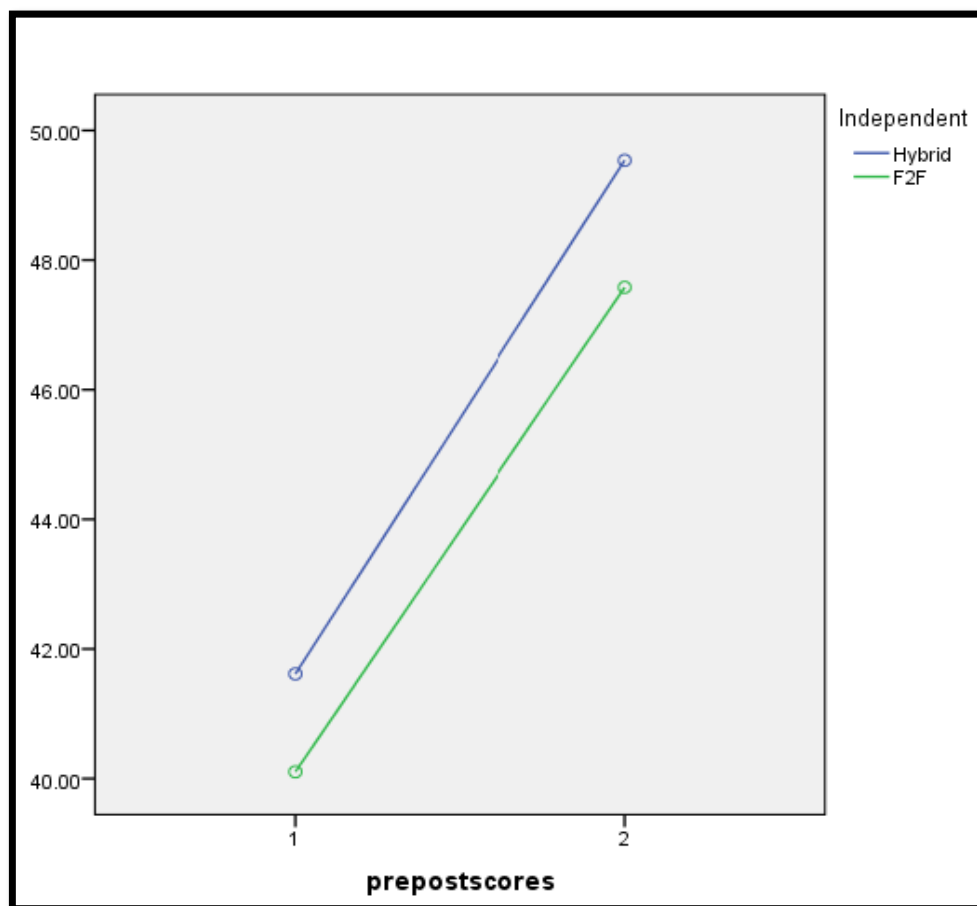


Figure 4.1 Progress Chart

between the ages of 22–24. The majority of the students were from China; 91.7% spoke Chinese while 8.3% spoke Korean as their native languages. Students who did not experience any hybrid or online courses before made up 83.3% of the class while 16.7% had experience with either hybrid or online courses.

In Section B, students agreed or disagreed to given statements, which allowed the researcher to understand their perceptions of the hybrid ESL 1040 course. Although there were features of the hybrid format students did not like, they were all satisfied with the course in general. Table 4.3 shows how students perceived the hybrid format in general and whether they were satisfied with the course or not. Students either strongly agreed

Table 4.3 Perception of the hybrid format in general

Statements Levels of agreement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am very satisfied with this hybrid course.	41.7%	58.3%	0	0
I would like to take another hybrid course.	58.3%	41.7%	0	0
I feel hybrid courses are as effective as face-to-face courses.	33.3%	66.7%	0	0
This hybrid course did not meet my learning needs	0	16.7%	75%	8.3%

or agreed to the first three statements given in the table, which indicates that they were satisfied with the hybrid format, found the hybrid format as effective as f2f courses, and want to take another hybrid course. The last question was about whether the course met their learning needs. While 16.7% of the students agreed to the statement “This hybrid course did not meet my learning needs,” 75% of the students disagreed and 8.3% strongly disagreed with the statement, which means that the hybrid course met their learning needs. I want to point out that this statement should have been put in a positive form as in “This hybrid course met my learning needs” as all the other statements in Section B. The fact that the statement was in negative form might have confused the two students who agreed to this statement as their earlier answers indicate that they perceived the hybrid format to be as effective as f2f courses and were satisfied with the course.

Four statements were included in Section B to elicit students’ perceptions of the online component in general. As shown in Table 4.4, the first statement was about the organization of the modules on Canvas; 58.3% of the students strongly agreed and 41.7% agreed that the modules on Canvas were easy to follow for them. The next statement

Table 4.4 Students' perceptions of the online component

Statements Levels of agreement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The modules on Canvas were easy to follow.	58.3%	41.7%	0	0
The online video lectures helped me with English grammar and editing.	50%	50%	0	0
The online exercises helped me practice English grammar and editing skills.	75%	25%	0	0
I had enough opportunities to practice English grammar and editing.	41.7%	58.3%	0	0

asked whether they agreed that the video lectures were helpful, and 50% of the students strongly agreed and the other 50% agreed that the video lectures helped them practice English grammar and editing skills. The third statement regarding the online days was about students' perceptions of the online exercises on Canvas. Students found the online exercises useful as well as the video lectures. In addition, 75% of the students strongly agreed and 25% agreed that the online exercises helped them practice English grammar and editing skills. Last, the fourth statement inquired information about whether students thought they had enough practice opportunities in the course. Students perceived the opportunities to be enough as 41.7% of the students strongly agreed and 58.3% agreed that they had enough opportunities to practice English grammar and editing skills.

The next four statements in the questionnaire focused on the features that hybrid courses differ from f2f courses and how students perceived them. The first statement was

about whether having a more flexible schedule thanks to the online days was perceived to be helpful by the students. Table 4.5 shows that 75% of the students strongly agreed and 25% agreed that they enjoyed having control over their own schedule because they were able to study whenever and wherever they preferred.

The second statement was about the fact that students had access to the video lectures all the time and could watch them as many times as they desired. Table 4.5 shows that 50% of the students strongly agreed and 41.7% of the students agreed that this feature was helpful. However, 8.3% disagreed in that they did not find this feature helpful.

While working on the online component of the class, students can work at their own pace as they assume more control of their own learning process compared to traditional f2f classes where teachers, most of the time, make the decisions. Thus, students were also

Table 4.5 Students' perceptions of the features peculiar to the hybrid format

Statements Levels of Agreement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoyed having control over my schedule (Being able to study on Canvas whenever and wherever I wanted to).	75%	25%	0	0
It was helpful to have access to the video lectures all the time so that I could watch them whenever I needed.	50%	41.7%	8.3%	0
It was good to be able to work individually at my own pace (=speed).	50%	50%	0	0
I spent more time thinking during the online discussions, assignments, and exercises than I would have in a face-to-face class environment.	50%	41.7%	8.3%	0

asked if they found being able to work at their own pace helpful. Table 4.5 shows that 50% of the students strongly agreed and the other 50% agreed that it was good to be able to work individually at their own pace.

Because students could work at their own pace, they could also spend as much time as they needed on the exercises. Therefore, whether having more response time pushed students to spend more time thinking on the questions on Canvas was included in the questionnaire. As seen in Table 4.5, 50% of the students strongly agreed and 41.7% agreed that they spent more time thinking during the online discussions, assignments, and exercises than they would have in a face-to-face class environment. However, 8.3% disagreed with the statement.

In Section B, there were two statements about the feedback and attention students received from the instructor. The first statement asked students whether they agreed that they received timely feedback from the instructor when she needed to grade the assignments Canvas could not grade automatically. The results show that 66.7% of the students strongly agreed and 33.3% agreed that they received timely feedback from the instructor as shown in Table 4.6.

As students see the instructor f2f for a limited time each week, making students feel like an individual in the classroom and attending to their individual needs are very important. Therefore, the latter statement inquired information about students' individual needs and asked them whether they agreed that they were able to get individualized attention from the instructor. Of the students, 66.7% strongly agreed and 33.3% agreed that they received individualized attention from the instructor when they needed it.

In hybrid courses, a portion of f2f days was replaced by online activity, which means

Table 4.6 Feedback and individualized attention from the instructor

Statements Levels of Agreement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I received timely feedback (within 24–48 hours) for the assignments my instructor needed to grade.	66.7%	33.3%	0	0
I was able to get individualized attention from the instructor when I needed it.	66.7%	33.3%	0	0

less f2f communication with the teacher and/or the classmates. This in turn might cause problems in creating a sense of community in the classroom. Therefore, the questionnaire included two statements to understand students' perceptions of being a community in hybrid courses. The first statement asked students whether they agreed that they felt the instructor's presence on Canvas during the online days. 50% strongly agreed and 41.7% agreed that they felt the instructor's presence on Canvas all the time. However, 8.3% disagreed with the statement as shown in Table 4.7.

The second statement regarding being a community in class was about the communication among students. Students were asked whether they agreed that the course created a sense of community among students that was comparable to a regular f2f class. 8.3% strongly agreed and 75% agreed while 16.7% strongly disagreed with the statement.

The last statement in Section B was about the f2f days; it asked whether the f2f days helped students practice what they studied online. Table 4.8 indicates that 66.7% strongly agreed and 33.3% agreed that f2f days provided them with opportunities to practice what they studied online.

Table 4.7 Students' perception of being a community

Statements Levels of Agreement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Although I only saw the teacher during the face-to-face days of the class, I felt her presence on Canvas all the time.	50%	41.7%	8.3%	0
This course created a sense of community among students that was comparable to a regular face-to-face class.	8.3%	75%	0	16.7%

Table 4.8 Students' perceptions of the f2f days

Statements Levels of Agreement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The face-to-face classes on Wednesdays provided me with opportunities to practice what I had studied in the modules.	66.7%	33.3%	0	0

Section C in the questionnaire was about how students interacted with the online components on Canvas and how responsible they were as students in the hybrid ESL 1040 course. It should be noted that there are missing data, as one student did not mark any of the options for the third statement in Table 4.9.

The second statement in Table 4.9 was about how honest the students were when taking the online quizzes. In the context of hybrid ESL 1040, being honest is defined as students doing their best on their first try and not clicking on the submit button to receive

Table 4.9 Students' interaction with the online components

Statements Frequency	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
I watched the video lectures my instructor recorded for each module.	58.3%	25%	16.7%	0
When I took the online exercises, I was honest.	83.3%	16.7%	0	0
I finished the modules before our face-to-face classes on Wednesdays.	66.7%	25%	0	0
I finished the module on the last night before our face-to-face class.	33.3%	25%	33.3%	8.3%

the answers to fill them in the next time they took the quizzes. According to the results, 83.3% of the students stated that they were always honest when taking the online quizzes and 16.7% stated that they were usually honest, which means they sometimes clicked on the submit button to see the answers before spending any time thinking on the questions in the online quizzes.

What stands out in Table 4.9 is that 66.7% of the students always and 25% usually finished the online modules before the f2f days; however, 33.3% of them finished the modules always on the last night before the f2f classes and 25% usually finished the modules on the last night. Therefore, we can infer that students tended to postpone their assignments even though they had a week to complete them.

Table 4.10 shows how responsible the students were for their own learning: Did they search online or email the instructor when they had a question? Did they read the

Table 4.10 Students' perception of responsibility

Statements Frequency	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
When I didn't understand something, I searched for the answer (e.g., searching online, asking the instructor).	66.7%	16.7%	16.7%	0
When my instructor left a comment on my assignments, I read it carefully.	66.7%	33.3%	0	0
I participated in the group activities we had on our face-to-face days.	50%	50%	0	0
I was able to manage my time (Allowed myself enough time to work on the modules).	50%	50%	0	0

instructor's comments on their assignments? Did they actively participate in f2f day activities? Did they manage their time well? As seen in Table 4.10, students claimed that they were responsible in managing their time, in-class participation, and reading instructor's comments on their assignments. However, some students did not look for answers every time they had a question, with 16.7% of the students indicating usually and 16.7% indicating that they sometimes searched for an answer to the questions that came up when they are studying online.

End of Semester Evaluations

Both the hybrid group and the f2f group were sent a course evaluation questionnaire at the end of the semester by the University. Because these questionnaires are designed to be used for every course offered at the University, the data that come from them are

limited in that the questions included in the questionnaire are very broad and do not target the specific teaching and learning practices that were part of the courses, which will be discussed in the section where limitations to the study are stated. However, it still provides some insight into whether the students found the course effective overall.

In the hybrid section, 14 out of 17 students filled out the questionnaire. The students in the hybrid section found the course effective overall: 71% strongly agreed, 21% agreed, and 7% strongly disagreed.

In the f2f section, 21 out of 25 students filled out the questionnaire. Judging from the percentages, one could conclude that the majority of the students found the f2f ESL 1040 course effective overall: 50% strongly agreed, 35% agreed, 5% mildly agreed and 10% strongly disagreed.

Qualitative Data

The qualitative data were collected from the two open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire that students in the hybrid ESL 1040 course answered, focus-group data, data from teaching journals, and end of semester evaluations. The data are presented in two main sections: teacher data and learner data.

Teacher Data

In this section, I report on the advantages and disadvantages of teaching English grammar in the hybrid format based on the data coming from the teaching journals, which are shaped by my own experiences as a graduate student and an entry-level ESL instructor in the U.S.A. I first describe my perceptions of the hybrid format in general and then my perceptions of teaching English grammar in the hybrid format and traditional f2f format. This section answers Research Questions 2, 3, and 5, which are the following:

Research Question 2: What are teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the hybrid ESL 1040 course? Research Question 3: What actions can be taken to improve the design and the effectiveness of the hybrid ESL 1040 course? Research Question 5: How effective is the f2f ESL 1040 course compared to the hybrid ESL 1040 course?

Teacher Perceptions of the Hybrid Format

This section contains a description of the challenges I encountered while teaching in a hybrid format as well as a description of the features of the hybrid format that were perceived as advantageous.

One recurring theme in the teaching journals was the amount of time I spent preparing the course for the hybrid format. There were several reasons that contributed to this perception. First, the data were collected in the pilot course, meaning that it was the first time that the ESL 1040 course had been taught in the hybrid format. Besides the time I spent planning lessons, I also spent a great amount of time creating the online practice exercises on Canvas, the Learning Management System (LMS) used by the University. The textbook for the course, *Grammar in Context 3*, did not have an online component to it. In total, I created 201 assignments on Canvas. For each assignment, instructions were written; due dates were created; questions and answers were created, and online quizzes that Canvas could grade were used at least once to test whether the immediate feedback Canvas gave was correct. Explanations as to why the incorrect option(s) were incorrect and why the correct option(s) were the correct one(s) were also provided for the review exercises created for students to study for the exams and contributed to the workload.

Second, the students were international students most of whom were in their Freshman year, new to using Canvas, and lacking advanced proficiency in the target

language. In the journals I report that some of the students had trouble understanding the online instructions, which led to an increase in the number of emails I received from students and the time I spent online as a result. However, the number of emails decreased as the semester progressed as students familiarized themselves with Canvas and knew what they were expected to do for each type of assignment (i.e., multiple dropdowns, fill in the blanks, multiple choice, true/false, discussion pages, matching).

Another challenge mentioned in the teaching journals was the time spent grading. Not every exercise allows for automatic and immediate feedback from Canvas (i.e., open-ended questions, discussion questions, composition assignments). I graded some types of assignments, which was very time consuming.

The fact that open-ended questions, discussion questions, and composition assignments took a lot of time to grade restricted me in the decisions I made when creating the online modules on Canvas. As I stated in my teaching journals, I had limited time to offer individual feedback to students on learning exercises because I was a graduate student and the instructor of the two classes. Even though I still included learning exercises in the modules that required individual feedback from the instructor, I was not able to add as many of them as I had wanted due to the limited time I had.

The teaching journals also included *in situ* data of my perceptions of how students used the hybrid format based on the course reports that Canvas automatically creates. Canvas allows instructors to track each student's progress relative to how much of the module they have studied so far, what scores they received on each of their tries on the online quizzes, what materials they downloaded, and which pages they viewed and how many times they viewed the pages. As the course instructor I was able to access this

information. Data in the teaching journal indicated that there were students who sometimes completed the whole module on the last night before the f2f classes, suggesting that they did not complete the online exercises to learn but merely to complete the module before it was due. Data in the teaching journals indicated that I reached this conclusion because I could see the scores students received on the online quizzes on their first try, which were zero for every Canvas graded assignment in the module. A score of zero means that students clicked on the submit button right away to get the answers to the questions so that they could simply fill the answers in the next time they took the quiz. Data from the teaching journals indicated that the hybrid format would be very difficult and demanding for students who are not able to take responsibility for their own learning.

Creating a learning community in classrooms is always a challenge for teachers. However, it is even more challenging to create that community in online courses. Even though students met once a week in class and always worked in small groups on f2f days, an analysis of teaching journal data indicated that only a few students were able to make connections with their classmates outside of class and that they had problems arranging meetings to finish the group assignments they needed to work on together.

Although teaching the course in a hybrid format presented several challenges, it had its advantages as well. As mentioned earlier in this section, Canvas allows instructors to see a detailed report of every move students made on Canvas. An analysis of data from the teaching journal showed that there was one feature of Canvas that I perceived to be very useful because it gives general reports for online quizzes as well as individual reports. The reports show which of the questions were or were not problematic for students. In the journals, I comment that by having access to these reports, I was able to

adjust my f2f day lesson plans to meet students' needs better.

Another advantage related to the use of Canvas is the linear presentation of modules. As illustrated in Figure 4.2, Canvas allows you to create subsections with titles and change the order of assignments. Most importantly, Canvas allows you to define requirements for each assignment (i.e., must contribute to the page, must submit the assignment), and after defining the requirements for each assignment, it is possible to set up the module in a way that requires students to move through the requirements in a sequential order. Data from the teaching journal indicated that this feature was very important in guiding the students as assignments build on each other and must be completed in a pedagogically sound fashion.

Module 8 - Infinitives and Gerunds		Oct 30, 2013 at 10:30am
Video Lectures and Power-point Presentations		
Video Lectures for Module 8		
Module 8 - Infinitives.pptx		
Infinitives - Sentences and Uses.pdf		
Module 8 - Gerunds.pptx		
Infinitives		
Infinitives Reading	Nov 6, 2013	21 pts
Time to Be Informal	Nov 6, 2013	6 pts
Adjectives + Infinitives	Nov 6, 2013	10 pts
Infinitives - Causative Verbs	Nov 6, 2013	5 pts
Infinitive or Base Form?	Nov 6, 2013	20 pts
Gerunds		
Discussion: American Families	Nov 6, 2013	20 pts
What have we learned so far?	Nov 6, 2013	18 pts
Choosing the correct preposition	Nov 6, 2013	12 pts
A little bit of everything	Nov 6, 2013	20 pts
Same or different?	Nov 6, 2013	8 pts
Sense-Perception Verbs	Nov 6, 2013	12 pts
Assignment 1 - Editing Quiz	Nov 6, 2013	27 pts
Writing Assignment		
Composition #1 First Draft	Nov 6, 2013	

Figure 4.2 Screen shot of one of the modules on Canvas

What distinguishes hybrid courses from online courses is that only a portion of the f2f time is replaced by online activities, and the class still meets f2f. How many times the class meets can change depending on the type of the course and the decisions made by the teacher. Hybrid ESL 1040 students at the University met once a week for 50 minutes, and the other two 50-minute classes were replaced by online study on Canvas. I noted that 50 minutes was not enough to cover what I planned to cover; however, because it was a pilot course, I did not have the opportunity to change the hours and the location of the class that had been set up as a traditional f2f class. Therefore, I needed to be very conscientious and plan carefully for what I would cover on f2f days. Nevertheless, an analysis of data from the teaching journals indicates that although short, f2f days were beneficial because students practiced the grammatical structures they studied on Canvas through interaction with their classmates, which created a direct connection between the online and the f2f days. However, I also point to the fact that this connection was not always transparent for the students who did not complete the module before the f2f days.

Another common theme that was extracted from the data in the teaching journals was related to classroom management on f2f days. Classroom management can be troublesome especially when students are not actively involved in class activities. Students can easily lose their attention when the teacher starts solo lecturing—even for a short period of time. The teaching journals do not include data to suggest that classroom management was difficult. Instead, these data include comments on successful classroom management on f2f days, and perceptions of why classroom management was successful. Success was attributed to the fact that f2f days did not involve any lecturing and students were always actively involved in small group activities.

Teacher Perceptions of Teaching English Grammar in the Hybrid Format

ESL 1040 is the first course in a sequence of ESL writing courses that satisfy the undergraduate writing requirement at the 1000-level for international students at the University. Students should be able to write grammatically correct sentences and paragraphs using academic language and edit paragraph-length compositions by the end of this course in order to be successful in the following courses. Therefore, in designing the course, I decided to integrate paragraph-level writing skills with English grammatical structures considered to be difficult for L2 learners and created the schedule in Table 4.11 when I designed the course. That the students studied English grammatical structures together with paragraph level writing skills prepared them for the three composition assignments they were required to complete by the end of the semester and for the following writing courses that they would take in the semester that followed. The schedule was used for both groups (i.e., f2f and hybrid).

Each week had its online component and in-class component. The online component for each week was a separate module on Canvas (see Figure 4.2). The modules included video lectures, PowerPoint presentations used in the video lectures, self-study sources, discussion pages, and online exercises for students to practice the grammar structures. The in-class component of the week included group, pair, or whole class activities in which students used the structures while communicating with each other or edited sentences and paragraphs in terms of grammar and paragraph organization (i.e., topic sentence, unity, coherence, and supporting details). An analysis of data in the teaching journals indicates that the relationship between the online components and the in-class components was complementary in that one (i.e., online component) prepared the

Table 4.11 ESL 1040 schedule

Weeks	Chapters from the book	Topics	Composition Assignments
Week 1		Syllabus Overview Canvas Orientation Needs Analysis (Pretest)	
Week 2	Appendix A & B	9/2 Labor Day – No Class Nouns & Articles <i>How to format a paragraph</i> <i>How to make titles</i>	
Week 3		Verb Tenses <i>Writing as a process</i>	
Week 4		Verb Tenses <i>Transitions</i>	
Week 5	Lesson 2	Passive Voice, Participial Adjs. <i>More transitions</i> Quiz I	
Week 6		Prepositions & Subject Verb Agreement <i>Restricting topics and writing topic sentences and concluding sentences</i>	
Week 7		Review for Midterm exam Midterm Exam	
Week 8		Fall Break – No Class	
Week 9	Lesson 4 & 5	Modals <i>Unity and Coherence</i>	
Week 10	Lesson 7	Gerunds and Infinitives <i>Punctuation</i>	
Week 11	Lesson 6	Adjective Clauses	Composition 1 1 st Draft
Week 12	Lesson 8	Adverb Clauses	Composition 1 Final Draft
Week 13	Lesson 9	Conditionals Quiz II	Composition 2 1 st Draft
Week 14	Lesson 10	Run-ons, fragments and comma splices 11/29 Thanksgiving – No Class	Composition 2 Final Draft
Week 15		Noun Clauses	Composition 3 1 st Draft
Week 16		Editing All Together Quiz III	Composition 3 Final Draft
12/18		Final Exam (Posttest) 8:00 am - 10:00 am	

students for the other (i.e., in-class component).

Each week covered a topic in which the grammar structures were featured (e.g., disasters, American presidents, shopping in the U.S., being a teenager in the U.S., consumer warnings, American families, Hollywood, and coming to America). Students did readings on topics and then the sentences that contained the grammatical structures were taken from the readings to introduce the grammatical structures. An analysis of teacher perceptions in the journal data suggests that topics helped me keep the unity in each module and made learning more meaningful as students were not learning grammar only by analyzing discrete sentences; instead, they were learning grammar through the sentences they have already read and processed for their meaning. Teacher perceptual data also indicate that the readings students did provided contextual examples for students and might have helped them pick up the structures and organization of paragraphs at a subconscious level.

Even though the aim of the course was for students to write three compositions by the end of the semester, only two of them were assigned due to time limitations. Data from the teaching journals indicate that the mini writing paragraph lessons in each module, the readings students did, and the grammar structures students studied were helpful in preparing students to write an organized paragraph at the end of the semester. Data also indicate that I did not correct students' grammar mistakes; instead, I used an editing key that included abbreviations for the common mistakes L2 English learners make (e.g., vt = Verb Tense). However, comments on the organization of the paragraphs were given. Thus, students used the editing key to fix their grammar mistakes, read my comments to improve their organization, and then submitted their final drafts. In the teaching journal, I

argue that the composition assignments were real ongoing writing processes because students submitted a first draft, received feedback, revised their first draft, and then submitted it as a final draft to be graded. Another comment that stood out in the teaching journal data was the comparison I made between the two groups. I perceived that the hybrid group improved their writing more than the f2f group did; however, a detailed analysis of the writing assignments was not made. The advantage of the hybrid group over the f2f group is perceptual.

Canvas allows instructors to embed videos from YouTube in the course, so I recorded my screen using the screen capture program Ink2Go and uploaded them into Canvas pages on a weekly basis. In the video lectures, students did not see me but rather a PowerPoint presentation with labeled topics. In the journals, I hope that the fact that I recorded only my screen made it easier for students to jump to a particular topic that they were having trouble understanding.

Videos serve two purposes; they can be lectures that cover the main content or they can serve as guides for covering the content in the modules. In these videos, I not only lectured on English grammar structures but also guided students about what they were supposed to do step by step. Students were also asked to stop the video and do a specific assignment in the module before they continued. However, in the data in the teaching journal, I noted that I had no control over how students utilized the video lectures. For example, I wrote that during a conversation with one of my students during an office hour, I was told that the student did not watch all the video lectures, but used them for clarification for points he could not understand from the PowerPoint presentations.

Modules contained several practice exercises in the form of quizzes. Matching,

true/false, multiple-choice questions, fill in the blanks, ordering sentences, and multiple dropdowns were the most common types of exercises used in the online component of the course. These types of online quizzes allowed students to obtain immediate feedback because the possible answers to the questions were limited in number. Students were able to take these online quizzes as many times as they wanted. Canvas scoring was automatic, and the system would keep the highest score they achieved. In the teaching journals, I suggested that having practice exercises online and using in-class time for only interactive group activities was a better use of time compared to doing these exercises in class time because students could work on these online exercises at their own pace whenever and wherever they wanted. In addition, the fact that they could take them as many times as they wanted helped reduce negative affect, which students would otherwise have while taking the quizzes. The data indicate that these types of exercises might sometimes become dull and monotonous when completed in class time, so moving them online was an advantage for the hybrid ESL 1040 course.

The teaching journal data also offered perceptions on the effective use of the discussion page. The discussion pages were set up on Canvas and functioned as either a warm-up to the readings that students would do next or as a during the reading activity. Students would be given two to three questions to answer and then asked to respond to another classmate's comment. In the notes taken at the beginning of the semester, I stated that the discussions did not yield good results; students gave very brief answers and usually forgot to (or did not) respond to peers' comments. However, data also indicate that the discussions that occurred later in the semester started to become very fruitful: students started to write more in length and better in quality compared to the beginning of

the semester. I noted that the questions led to real communication among students. Figure 4.3 is a screen shot of the discussion page about well-known accidents or disasters that students remembered. The first student's comment included details about the Great East Japan Earthquake that happened in 2011 and what he was doing when he heard the news. His comment is very good in terms of its grammar and content. The two students who replied to the first student's comment indicated that they remembered the disaster as well and expressed what they thought about it, which shows that they read the earlier comment made by their peer thoroughly so that they were able to comment on it.

F2f days occurred once a week for 50 minutes and included two to three pair, group, or whole class activities in which students could use the grammatical structures they learned on Canvas to communicate with one another or edit sentences and paragraphs

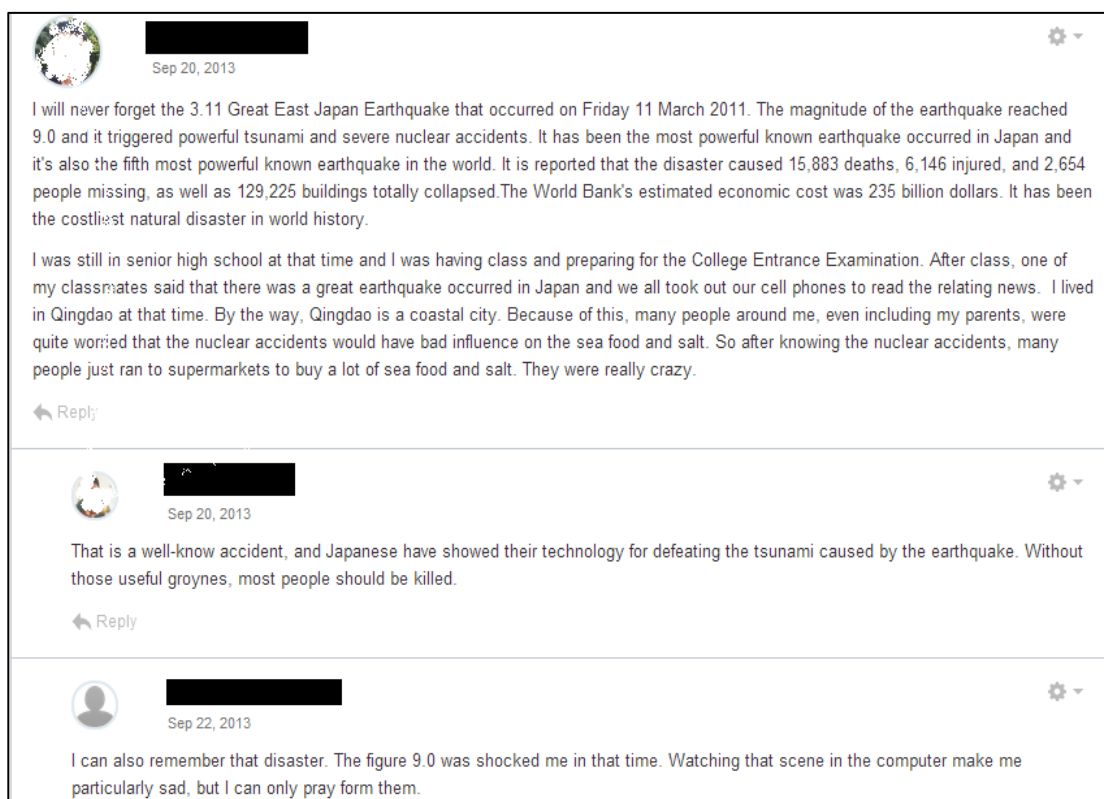


Figure 4.3 Screen shot of a discussion page on Canva

with their peers. In the journals, I stated that I gave very short pop quizzes at the beginning of the f2f days to encourage students to watch the video lectures; however, I also stated that I stopped this practice early on in the semester as the f2f time was already limited, and I preferred to use every minute of it for group activities.

Information gap activities involve two students in a task, and each student has only part of the information needed. Because of the gap in the information, students must cooperate and share their information by speaking or writing to each other. For example, two students may have complementary charts or tables with missing information. They ask each other questions to find the missing information. The goal of the activity is for the students to discover the missing information so that they can complete the task. In the teaching journals, information gap activities are mentioned quite a few times. I report that information gap activities are engaging and very appropriate for the purpose of f2f days because students have to communicate with each other to fill in the gaps of information.

One information gap activity that was mentioned in the journals is *Guess Who*, a board game. Each player has a board that shows characters with different appearances and chooses one character among them. The aim is to ask the other player questions about his/her character to find out which character s/he has chosen (e.g., is your character someone who has glasses?) without looking at his/her board; I reported that students participated in this activity in groups as I had a limited number of *Guess Who* boards. Each group had two students in it, and they had to use adjective clauses to ask questions about the characters. Data from the teaching journals indicated that this information gap activity was truly engaging and offered a meaningful context for using adjective clauses. I also commented on the fact that I could hear students using adjective clauses as I was

walking around monitoring the activity.

Another information gap activity mentioned in the journals was an activity in which students worked in pairs to schedule a time to meet. Each student received a weekly schedule. The aim was to find all the available times to meet by asking each other questions using future tense forms (i.e., future simple tense, present continuous tense, and be going to form). My perception of this activity was that it could be improved by letting the students create their own schedule to make it more like a real-life situation.

As mentioned earlier, because ESL 1040 is designed to help international students prepare themselves for academic writing, students need to be able to judge the grammaticality of sentences, spot errors, and edit them. In the journals, I indicated that on almost every day, there was at least one pair or group editing activity. The most common types of activities used for editing were *Walkabout* and *Happy Hour* (Bassano & Christison, 1997; Christison & Bassano, 1995), activities designed to promote student interaction.

Happy Hour is an activity in which each student receives a slip of paper that has a question on it. Students are asked to find a partner and ask and answer the questions. Then, they exchange slips of paper and find another classmate to talk to. For the purpose of editing sentences, there were sentences on the slips of papers with potential grammar errors. Students talked to four other students about the grammaticality of the sentences and then discussed the answers as a whole class. Data in the teaching journals indicated that my perceptions of the Happy Hour Activity are two-fold: It is an effective review exercise for days and a good way to help students get to know each other. I reported that it was easy to include all the important points for a particular grammatical structure

by writing one or two sentences on each of the slips of paper and creating as many slips of paper as the number of my students in class. I also noted that the activity pushed students to be active and helped them get to know their classmates as they needed to walk around and communicate with different classmates. However, one disadvantage of this activity was that shy students had a difficult time and would stand in the middle of the classroom waiting for another classmate to initiate the conversation.

Walkabout is another activity that was done on f2f days for editing and other purposes. Walkabout requires students to walk around the classroom in pairs or groups and engage with the content of posters on the walls. An analysis of data from the teaching journals indicated that the Walkabout activity served different purposes. For example, students walked around the classroom to check the grammaticality of the sentences, complete the sentences in a meaningful and grammatical way, evaluate the quality of the paragraphs on the posters, or write descriptions for the pictures on the posters. My perceptions of the Walkabout activity was that it helped students stay active as it was both visual and kinesthetic. I also comment that Walkabout activity is very flexible in that the posters can easily be adjusted to fit several different lesson purposes.

Teacher Perceptions of Teaching English Grammar in the Traditional F2f Format

In this section, an analysis of teacher perceptions of the f2f ESL 1040 course based on an analysis of data in the teaching journals is presented. F2f ESL 1040 is essentially the same course as the hybrid ESL 1040 course except the format the content is delivered in. Therefore, after briefly stating what parts of the course were the same as the hybrid format, I will focus on in what ways it was different from the hybrid course.

The f2f ESL 1040 course followed the same schedule as the hybrid ESL 1040 (see Table 4.11). The same content was covered by giving the same information in each class and using the same materials, activities, and exercises. However, the way each of the materials and exercises were used differed to utilize the f2f format to its full potential. The f2f group was given the same exams on the same days, and they wrote two composition assignments as well.

The f2f class met three times a week for 50 minutes. The lectures were given in class. Canvas was used in the f2f ESL 1040, too. However, it was not used to introduce new knowledge as in the hybrid format; instead, it was used to assign homework, upload materials, make announcements, and enter grades.

An analysis of data in the teaching journals indicated that the same PowerPoint presentations were used in both the f2f and the hybrid ESL 1040 courses at the beginning of the semester. The difference between the two courses was that in the f2f ESL 1040 course everything was completed in class time, and additional homework was assigned on Canvas. However, the power-point presentations were used for the hybrid course in the online video lectures on the grammatical structures. After the first few classes, I noted that lecturing on the grammatical structures did not work well in the f2f class as students got bored, which in turn led to problems in classroom management. In the following weeks, I changed the way I lectured in the f2f class. I included the students in the learning process more by doing activities like instant-expert, (Bassano and Christison, 1997), an activity that gives more responsibility to students for learning and teaching as students first study the information given to them and teach it to their classmates in small groups. However, teacher perceptual data indicate that instant expert activities did not

work well as quite a few students were not able to summarize and analyze the information to be an expert on it and teach it to their group mates. I stated in the journals that I tried to overcome this problem by going over the questions in the charts as a whole class and helping students fill in the missing parts in their charts after they had already worked on it together.

However, this approach led to another problem: limited time. Because instant-expert activities took a great deal of time, I once again took a different approach to explaining the grammatical structures: giving students assignments in which I had them read the relevant chapters from the course book and answer some questions related to the form and the use of the structures before in-class lectures. However, I drew on earlier experiences and decided to give in-class quizzes based on the lectures. Based on these data, it seems logical to suggest that teacher perception of teaching a grammar course in the f2f format was that keeping the students engaged while at the same time maintaining the schedule (see Table 4.11) in one semester was demanding and challenging.

The grammar practice exercises that were used as quizzes in the online component of the hybrid course were used in the f2f ESL 1040 course as well. However, the way the grammar practice exercises were done in the f2f class was different than it was in the hybrid class: they were completed in class right after the presentation of the new information, and students usually worked in pairs or groups. Data indicate that they were usually completed in entertaining formats rather than doing them by the book as I did not want to lose students' attention. For example, students raised different colored cards to give their answers, each color referring to a different answer, which also served as a formative assessment at the same time.

I also observed that when done in class time, exercises that contained open-ended questions were more effective and less time-consuming than doing them online on Canvas. For example, I commented in the journals that the exercises in which students completed sentences using a specific grammatical structure were more effective in class time. The way this type of exercises was done in the f2f 1040 course was that everyone would complete the sentences based on their own experiences and opinions and discuss it with a partner. Afterwards, I asked students to give me a few examples of how they completed the sentences and write them on the board to check that the grammatical structures were correct. I perceived these exercises to be good tools encouraging communication among students. I commented in the teaching journal in the noun clauses lesson that completing sentences about their opinion on America (e.g., I think..., I'm disappointed....., I'm surprised....) led to an intimate discussion in which students discussed how homesick they were. On the other hand, this type of open-ended exercises would take much more time in the hybrid format as students would enter individual entries on Canvas, and I would have to give individual feedback to each student.

Another comment that stood out in the notes for the f2f ESL 1040 course was how much I knew about students as individuals in each class and which classroom made a better learning community. I reported that the students in the f2f course definitely created a learning community and made close friends during the semester; however, even though students in the hybrid course worked well in groups on f2f days, only a few of them became friends in the class. However, I also comment that I believed the students in my hybrid course had a much closer communication with me even though I met them only once a week. It is likely that the relationship developed because of the constant

communication between the students and me through Canvas.

Learner Data

The data that come from the focus group and the two open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire and end of semester evaluations are described in this section. The data presented in this section answer two of the research questions: 3) What are learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of the hybrid ESL 1040 course? and 4) What actions can be taken to improve the design and the effectiveness of the hybrid ESL 1040 course?

Focus Group

This subsection presents students' perceptions of the hybrid ESL 1040 course based on the focus group conducted on the last day of the semester by a professional from the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE) at the University. The focus group lasted for 40 minutes, and the following questions were asked. I will address each question in the order presented below:

1. What did you like the most about the course?
2. What did you like the least about the course?
3. What do you think about the modules on Canvas in terms of their content and organization? Were they helpful?
4. What did you think about the face-to-face days in terms of your own learning?
5. When you compare a hybrid and a traditional face-to-face class, which one do you think is better and why? Or do you find them equally good?
6. Did you feel a sense of community with your peers in the class even though the class has only met once a week? Why? Do you think the sense of community is different in a f2f class? Why?

Question #1

A think-pair-share activity was used to elicit answers to Question #1. Students first brainstormed on what they liked about the course individually, then paired up with another classmate to share their ideas, and then shared their ideas with the whole class.

The hybrid ESL 1040 course met once a week for 50 minutes, and the other two 50 minute classes were replaced by online activity. The fact that the hybrid format provided the students' with a flexible schedule was regarded as one of the features students liked about the course. One student expressed that, "(...) we just have one day per week for class. I can study home (...) and I like that." Another student added that learning online does not interfere with his understanding of the material because "(...) we can meet with the instructor if we have any questions. So, that doesn't interfere."

Each week's topic(s) were explained in video lectures. The instructor recorded her screen when lecturing using a PowerPoint presentation. The students perceived the online video lectures to be useful. One student commented that "(...) she would show us some videos to teach knowledge." Although he did not state that he liked it, it can be assumed so as this was his answer to the question of what they liked the most about the course. Students always had access to the video lectures, so they could watch it as many times as they desired. Another student included this advantage of video lectures in his comment. He said that, "I like the online lectures because if we don't understand, we can watch it again and again."

Another feature of the hybrid format liked by the students was the f2f days. One student expressed that he liked the f2f days because he did not find them dull. He said, "I like that [] (the instructor) gave us some activities in class. I mean it is not boring."

Question #2

The answers to the question were elicited through another think-pair-share activity. Students' concerns were mostly related to their grades in the course, which were given according to the following percentages:

- Final Exam 25%
- Writing Assignments 15%
- Mid-term + Quizzes 27%
- Pop-Quizzes.....3%
- Online Practice Exercises30%
- Extra Credit Assignment2%

A student expressed his dissatisfaction with the percentage of the online practice exercises. While talking about what he did not like about the course, he said, “Even though we finish all homework, it adds only little to our final grade. If it were more, it can promote us to do it.” Another student also commented on the percentages. As stated earlier in this chapter, I gave very short quizzes at the beginning of the class to encourage students to watch the video lectures; however, due to time limits on the f2f days, I stopped giving those pop quizzes. One student pointed out to this issue by saying, “If we screw up one pop-quizzes, we cannot raise the grade because we don’t have a lot of points (...) we had only 5 or 6 of them.”

One student was upset about the grammar questions on Canvas. He stated that, “Grammar questions are not always clear. Not clear what I should use. Sometimes I think there are two rights.” Although what he exactly refers to is not clear in his comment, I, as the instructor of the course, assume that he is talking about multiple dropdown exercises. In multiple dropdown exercises, students can select more than one option as there might be multiple correct answers, and this might have confused the student.

Question #3

Answers to Question #3 were also elicited in a think-pair-share activity. Students first shared what they liked about the Canvas page and then what they did not like about it.

The Canvas page was considered to be well organized by some students. One student stated that he liked the setup on Canvas, and everything was very easy to follow. He said, “I would say it (the Canvas page) was helpful because like it was clear. I took the assignment step by step.” Another student agreed with him and also added that, “When you watch the video lectures, you will see [] (the instructor) will tell “do next” and you can go do next directly.”

Video lectures on Canvas were considered to be useful. One student found it helpful that not only did the instructor upload the PowerPoint presentations, but also she explained them in a video lecture. She stated that, “She uploaded the files and she also explained them in video lecture.”

Students also agreed that the due dates were very clear because of the calendar on Canvas and the instructor would also remind them of the important deadlines by making announcements on Canvas.

Discussion Leader: What else do we think?

Student A: It is about the calendar. So we can organize our time according to the calendar.

Discussion Leader: So, the calendar was kept accurate?

Student A: Yes.

Student B: She also reminded us with the assignments and everything.

Discussion Leader: Ok. Good. Did she remind you in class or on Canvas?

Student B: On Canvas.

Student C: Also in class.

Student B: Yeah both.

Discussion Leader: Both. Ok, great. Were the reminders... Were those in the calendar?

Student B: No, they were like messages in Canvas.

The instruction box for the online exercises would include suggestions as well as the instructions for the exercises. Suggestions were resource materials students could refer to before or while doing the exercises; they would remind students of where we studied these structures or where they can find more information on them. One student regarded these tips as useful. He said, “I liked it too that she would give us tips before doing the assignments. Like if we are not clear we can see page bla bla before we do the assignments (...) it is pretty good.”

One limitation that was brought up by a student was also discussed in teacher perceptions: there are not explanations for each and every online exercise. The student brought up the topic by saying, “I think what is not helpful. Hmm... There are not explanations after the answer. They are just answers. There are few explanations why we should choose this answer.”

Question #4

Question number #4 was a think-share activity. Students first individually brainstormed on what they liked and did not like about the f2f days in terms of their own learning, wrote down their ideas, and then shared it with the whole group.

One student seemed to grasp the complementary relationship between the online component and the f2f days. He said, “I like that the activities in class were related to the assignments and the lecture we took before.”

As stated in the teacher perception section, f2f days were not long enough to do enough practice. Even though there was a complementary relationship between the two, it was not long enough to practice everything students studied online. A student seemed to realize that the f2f days were not long enough. He commented, “We just practice small

part of it (what they studied online) not all of it. We should have more efficiency and do them more, practice more.”

Question #5

Question #5 was answered in a group discussion. The discussion leader created three different groups in class: 1) hybrid, 2) f2f, and 3) both. Students picked a side and then discussed why they thought one was better than the other, or why they found each format equally good. Afterwards, every group shared their ideas with the whole class.

The hybrid group said that they had already stated their reasons in Question #1: the hybrid format is convenient because they have to come to class only once a week and when they do not understand something, they can go back and read it again or watch the video lecture again.

One new point that was discussed was about the course being a writing class. One student claimed that this course was effective in the hybrid format because he did not need too much speaking to achieve the objectives of the course. He stated, “Doing it by myself is the most important. I don’t need too much speaking in the class. It is a writing class.”

The traditional group had two reasons for which they found a traditional f2f class better. One reason they gave for their decision was that they were too busy during the semester and doing everything online required them to check Canvas regularly, which was difficult: “So hybrid class is usually all step is online. We are too busy and forget to look at the Canvas.”

Another argument made in favor of the traditional course was about the instant interaction that takes place in the classroom. F2f group found this interaction as one of

the strongest features of the f2f courses. One student in the group conveyed this idea by saying

We come here. The teacher and students more communicate. We can solve the problems on time. After class we can go to ask Tulay on time. If we take the class on the internet, we just can't. We just wait for the next f2f day Wednesday....To here... I think that's not good. The problem needs to be solved on time.

The group that argued that both formats could be equally good discussed two different variables that could make a course effective in the hybrid format. One variable is the teacher. One student in the group claimed that, "It depends on the teacher. Teacher needs to be responsible, so it is good in hybrid." Another student in the group agreed and added another point: "Also it depends on the class. If class needs more discussion, have more discussions, then maybe f2f class is good."

Question #6

For Question #6, another think-share activity was used to elicit answers. However the question was split into two parts: Did you feel a sense of community with your peers in the class even though the class has only met once a week? Why? Why not? (6a) Do you think the sense of community is different in a face-to-face class? Why? Why not? (6b)

For Question #6a, only one student shared his answer with the whole group. He expressed that he felt the difference between the two formats as there was less passion in the hybrid format. He said, "In [hybrid] class, I didn't see any passion or energy in class."

Even though Question 6b was about feeling a sense of community in the class, which includes the interaction with both the teacher and the classmates, students tended to comment off topic.

Two students argued that they did not think the hybrid format was any different than the f2f format because they believed that the end goal was getting the education and

hybrid format served the purpose for them: “I wouldn’t say so. It is not different. We still get the education. It is the same.” Another student agreed with the previous comment and commented on his communication with the instructor. He said, “She gave feedback so fast and she replied to messages so fast.” A different student in the group shared his ideas on his communication with the instructor as well.

I agree. I think there is not much difference because I guess Tulay always worked because when I submit something on Canvas, and she graded I mean just a few minutes or just a few hours after my submission.

As students did not comment on their communication with each other at all, the discussion leader needed to elicit the answer by asking them if they interacted with their peers on campus, and students answered no.

Questionnaire

As stated earlier in this chapter, students in the hybrid section filled out a questionnaire that had two open-ended questions in it. The aim was to gather students’ feedback to better understand their perceptions of the hybrid format and inform instruction in the hybrid ESL 1040 course. In total 12 students took the questionnaire. The two open-ended questions were the following: In what ways is a hybrid course better or worse compared to a traditional face-to-face class? What would you change in this course? Why? In the first question some students did not specify which format they thought was better; instead, they discussed in what ways each format was effective or not. Also, some students misunderstood the second question; they commented on how the course changed them instead of what they would want to change in the course. Therefore, after I present the relevant data, I will also present in what ways the course changed the students as they stated in the questionnaire.

The fact that f2f time is replaced with some online activity in hybrid courses was regarded as beneficial by 10 students. This is likely because it gave them more control over their schedule. Table 4.12 shows the various reasons for which students thought replacing f2f time with online activity was beneficial for them.

Two students indicated that they had more practice opportunities in the hybrid course, and doing reviews was easy as everything was kept on Canvas. Student 5 believed that the fact that Canvas contained many practice opportunities improved his knowledge of English grammar: “The hybrid course is better than traditional face-to-face class because I can do more practice on Canvas and it really improved my grammar.” Student 8 believed that Canvas made reviews easy. He wrote, “I can easily review things on Canvas. Everything is there. Very convenient.”

Only one student commented on the fact that hybrid courses help with the anxiety that

Table 4.12 Reasons for which online days are considered beneficial

Students	Reasons
S1	“I think hybrid course is much better than a traditional f2f class. (...) Besides, I can study anytime I want.”
S3	“Hybrid course was better because I was able to study at dorm.”
S6	“We can manage our free time, which means I can do it anytime I want.”
S7	“We can have more free time to do what we want.”
S8	“I can study any time before class”
S9	“Hybrid course give us more free time, which is good.”
S10	“I can manage my time and don’t need to go to class.”
S11	“First, for advantages, the hybrid course can set us "free", which means we can study at any time we like instead of only the class time. This can make our study more effective.”
S12	“Personally, I have good self-learning ability so I think ESL 1040 hybrid is absolute work for me. It allowed me to schedule my own things. For example, I will spend 4-5 hour for learning ESL per week, and I never worried about no time because we only meet once a time per week.”

shy students have when they need to interact with others f2f. Student 3 wrote that he was very comfortable working in an online environment as no one could see him. He stated, “I am very shy and working online is easy. Because nobody sees me.”

Three students made comments about the feedback they received in the course. As discussed earlier, Canvas provided immediate feedback for exercises whose answers were limited in number, and the assignments that could not be graded by Canvas were graded by the instructor. Students believed that they received faster feedback in the hybrid format. Student 10 expressed this by saying, “I can get faster feedback about what I did right or wrong.” Also, student 11 stated, “And as all the grades will be put on the Canvas instantly, we can check them right after we finish the homework or exams and get detailed, personal feedbacks.” Student 12 commented on the feedback given by the instructor of the course. By saying “If I have encountered any ESL problem, my instructor will also give help even on Saturday night, so I could always get help on time,” Student 12 believed that the instructor made herself available when he needed extra help.

Some exercises on Canvas did not have detailed explanations about the correct and the wrong answers due to limited time resources discussed earlier, and student 10 expressed that he needed more explanations in the feedback given even though he liked the fact that he received immediate feedback. Student 5 shared the same opinion as Student 10: “I want to change the details about Canvas assignment. Because the assignment answer is not clear which means I don’t know why to choose this one. And it just give correct answer.”

The fact that the lectures were given through video lectures and students could watch them at their own pace was believed to be useful by two students. Student 7 found it

useful that he could stop the video lectures whenever he needed to check something: “I can have time to look for something about the class when I take it. I can stop it anytime.”

Student 11 appreciated that he was able to take notes at his own pace while listening to the video lectures. He wrote

Also, the online teaching videos provide us with opportunities of taking detailed notes. In traditional classes, students, especially those who write carefully and slowly like me, often don't have enough time to take detailed notes because the teacher has to finish the content he or she has prepared before the class and they usually don't leave much time for students to take note.

However, by saying, “I cannot read teacher’s body language, so I sometimes feel a little bored,” student 10 pointed out that body language helps learners understand better and learning through video lectures may not be for everyone, which takes us to the next point, synchronous f2f communication.

Student 4 indicated that the fact that lectures were not offered through synchronous communication caused him problems, as he could not ask questions immediately after he had a question:

In face-to-face class, if I met some problems, I could ask teacher instantly. But the hybrid course always brought me a series of trouble. I had to send e-mail to teacher or read the textbook carefully. I think I will appreciate if ESL 1040 could be a tradition class.

The fact that there were limited opportunities for f2f communication during the online days caused another problem for Student 3: making friends in class. He wrote, “(...) However, I could not make any friends in class.”

Student 11 wrote useful comments for the second question: what would you change in this course? Why? The video lectures on Canvas were usually 30 minutes or less for each topic covered in the module. Student 11 recommended that the videos be shorter:

I think you can also divide the videos into some shorter videos, each with a clear

topic. Usually, we got a video of 20, or 30 minutes in a module which includes all the contents. That can be difficult to find a specific topic. Also, please don't divide them into too many parts because it will be tedious to keep changing videos.

Student 11 made the connection between a student's personality (i.e., conscientiousness, motivation) and being successful in the hybrid format by saying

Human beings are inclined to be lazy. The face-to-face class is a kind of force that pushes students to study. Since the class is online, the only thing that can push a student to study is his or her own self-discipline. But for most students who are not so excellent, this kind of force is very, very weak.

He then recommended a solution that would help students stay on track and not leave every assignment to the last minute. He recommended that the due dates could be periodical throughout the week instead of allowing students to work on the module until the f2f class, which was on Wednesdays.

For deadlines, I think you can separate them, and not make everything due on Wednesday. You can make several homework terms due on every day to keep the students to study every day. If things are accumulated to the only due day, I don't think they will really work hard on understanding things. I think all they want to do is to finish the homework as quickly as they can before the due time instead of really remembering and understanding things.

By saying, "I think in the face-to-face classes, we could sometimes spend more time in one game. Not only do a lot of games but not do them well," Student 6 seemed to realize that we sometimes rushed during the f2f days as we had limited time. Lengthening the f2f class time is the solution to Student 6's suggestion.

The students who misinterpreted Question #2 commented that their grammar and writing skills improved in the hybrid ESL 1040 course. Student 4 wrote, "Before I took this course, my grammar knowledge was poor (...) and it caused a lot of problems in my writing assignments. After finishing the course, I felt I had grasp a lot of knowledge of grammar and article formatting," and Student 7 wrote, "I think my grammar is better than

before. When I talk to others, I can use them quickly and I can also understand what others mean easily.

End of Semester Evaluations

The qualitative part in end of semester evaluations comes from the two open-ended questions included in the questionnaire: 1) Comments on course effectiveness and 2) Comments and suggestions on instructor performance. I do not report on every comment students made as some of them consisted of only one word, and I could not interpret what the student wanted to express with that one specific word.

Only four of the students in the hybrid group commented on the first question. One student commented on the fact that it was helpful to be able to watch the video lectures as many times as he wanted and the fact that he can email the instructor if he still had questions. He wrote, “I can watch the video again and again to get the point of a question. We can ask questions anytime by e-mail.”

Only two students left comments on instructor performance. Both students thought alike in that they thought the instructor was very patient. One of them wrote, “She is very patient. She works really hard,” while the other student wrote, “I can ask any questions, even those questions are easy and my English is not good enough to describe, really thanks for her patience.” The second student also commented on the games we played on f2f days. He found them helpful in that they helped him revise what he studied online by saying, “...[] (the instructor) always let us play interesting games to remember new knowledge.”

In f2f ESL 1040 course, 10 students left short comments on the effectiveness of the course. One student stated that he liked the PowerPoint presentations as they helped him

with his studies, and he found the homework complementary as there was a relationship between the material covered in class and the assigned homework by saying, “The PowerPoint slide was clear to see and the homework helped a lot to understand the material.” Two students expressed that the course helped them improve their grammar and writing skills. One of them wrote, “This is a grammar class, help me do better in the next class, and it’s helpful for writing a lot.” Three students listed the names of the class activities they enjoyed: article analysis, homework assignments, group work, hot potato and many other games we played in class. One also stated that he found use of Canvas effective.

Nine students left comments on the effectiveness of the teacher. Three students commented that they enjoyed the games the instructor prepared for them to practice the target structure. Two students found the instructor’s teacher talk helpful. One wrote, “loud and clear voice that can get student's attention.” Two students expressed that the instructor provided them with several different ways while teaching a structure. One wrote, “teacher will give a lot of example to help us understand the knowledge, and she will teach us some game in the class help us study, make the class more fun. I love it” while another student wrote, “she provided several ways to learn for each subject, which was so helpful. Well-organized.”

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this section, the results presented in Chapter 4 are discussed based on the literature reviewed and my knowledge and experience in the field as an MA Linguistics graduate student and an entry-level ESL instructor in the USA. Therefore, it should be noted that the discussions are highly personal and might be interpreted differently by others.

The discussion is divided into three different sections: teacher and learner data, limitations for the study, and suggestions for future studies. Teacher and learner data are discussed together as there are several interesting relationships between students' and the instructor's perceptions. The discussion is mostly based on the data from the hybrid course data as there are not many data sources available for the f2f ESL 1040, and I have noted this as a limitation of my action research project. However, my perceptions of the f2f course are discussed when comparisons are needed between the two formats. The shortcomings of the ESL 1040 in the hybrid format are also discussed and suggestions to overcome them in the future are provided, which answers Research Question 4, "What actions can be taken to improve the design and the effectiveness of the hybrid ESL 1040 course?"

Teacher and Learner Data

Research Question 1 asked, “Does hybrid instruction have a positive effect on the development of students’ knowledge of grammar and editing in the ESL 1040 course?” *T* test results showed that there were no significant differences between the mean scores for the pre- and posttests, which means that the students in both groups started and finished ESL 1040 at the same level. The fact that students in both groups made progress in their knowledge of English grammar and editing skills provides support for previous studies showing that a hybrid course can be at least as effective as a traditional f2f class (Rubio & Thoms, 2012). Knowing that hybrid ESL 1040 is at least as effective as a f2f ESL 1040 course, the ESL Program at the University might offer it as an optional ESL 1040 course for several reasons that are discussed in this section.

The challenges I encountered while designing and teaching the course made me more aware of the fact that designing a course is an iterative process, and courses can be improved each time they are taught by coconstructing the knowledge through interactions with the instructor and the students (Hatch, 2002). This action research project allowed me to construct my own knowledge about the hybrid format thanks to the collected data. If I had the chance to teach the courses again for the second time, I would have improved the course in several ways based on the data that I gathered on teacher perceptions and students’ perceptions of the course in the first cycle of this action research project.

Based on the data collected to answer Research Questions 2 and 3, which are about teacher and student perceptions, I believe that one of the biggest advantages of hybrid courses is that students have more autonomy in that they can study wherever and whenever they desire and can spend as much time as they need on the online exercises or

the video lectures. Almost every student in the focus group and the questionnaire expressed that they enjoyed having more control of their schedules, which supports Murray's (1999) findings: learner autonomy as the most salient feature of the learners' experiences.

However, I also believe that it is important that students be conscientious and responsible for this “freedom” to be considered as an advantage. Having autonomy in the learning process can foster students' learning and increase their motivation if they take responsibility for their own learning. However, as Student 11 stated in the questionnaire, not every student can stay on top of things; some tend to postpone completing tasks to the very last minute, which can affect one's learning in a negative way. Therefore, it is important that instructors do needs analyses for students who are planning to take hybrid courses to make them question themselves about whether they are responsible and conscientious enough to succeed in a hybrid course or not. The same process should be applied in traditional f2f classes too in cases where students have the option of taking the same course in the hybrid format.

In the hybrid ESL 1040 course, students completed one module each week. The modules were unlocked right after the f2f classes on Wednesdays, and students were allowed to work on the assignments until the next f2f day. However, as stated in Chapter 4, some students tended to postpone completing their assignment to the last night, which probably did not give them enough time to reflect on their learning before the f2f classes. Student 11's suggestion should be taken into consideration to give students the motivation to work on the modules on time. He suggested that the instructor provide extrinsic motivation by dividing the modules in parts and making each part due at

different times of the week so that students keep working on the module throughout the week. When implemented, this suggestion can make a difference in students' study habits as they will not want to lose points in the course and will be motivated to finish the assignments before the due dates.

Data collected to answer Research Question 3, "What are learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of the hybrid ESL 1040 course?" revealed that some students postponed working on the modules until the last night and sometimes just clicked on the submit button to receive the answers to every quiz to enter them the next time they took the quizzes. This problem could be solved by utilizing a specific feature that Canvas provides. On Canvas it is possible to set up online exercises in a way that students can only see which questions they got right or wrong without seeing what the answers are. Therefore, students would have to work on the online exercises to find out the answers and cannot just click on the submit button and receive the answers to fill them in the next time they take the quizzes. They would know that they needed to allow themselves enough time to work on the exercises because they cannot see the answers right away. However, I have a few concerns about using this feature because even a missing punctuation mark might make a correct answer incorrect, and students would not be able to understand why they keep getting a specific question wrong, which might cause frustration instead of promoting better learning.

The fact that some students were not motivated to work on the modules could also be attributed to how much the online day assignments contributed to their final grade in the course. Only 30% of their final grade came from the online exercises. During the focus group, one expressed his concern about the percentages that make up the final grade and

said that he would be more motivated to finish the modules if they were worth more points. Thus, increasing the weight of the online exercises could help motivate students to work on the modules.

I believe that the fact that hybrid courses still meet f2f is one of the reasons for which it is a very promising teaching format: while taking advantage of online technologies, it still takes advantage of the f2f synchronous communication on f2f days. This combination, in my opinion, allows hybrid courses to achieve levels of success a fully online or f2f traditional course may not.

Based on the data collected to answer Research Question 2, the hybrid format was perceived to be a good fit for an English grammar course such as ESL 1040 because of the complementary relationship that could be built between the online and f2f days and thus the use of synchronous and asynchronous communication. The grammar lectures and exercises, which students did to practice grammar and editing, could easily be made available on Canvas and did not require synchronous communication. The f2f days included more interactive activities in which students could use the structures they studied online through synchronous communication with their peers.

The analysis of teaching journals, the questionnaire, and the focus group revealed that the f2f days and online days were perceived to be engaging and useful both by the students and myself. The reason I perceived f2f days to be beneficial was because I could engage the students in activities in which they could practice their knowledge through interaction with their classmates, which is considered to be a crucial factor in L2 acquisition (Rubio & Thoms, 2012). Students' perceptions of the f2f days matched with my perceptions as they either strongly agreed or agreed that the f2f days allowed them to

practice their knowledge of English grammar and editing skills. Moreover, in the focus group, one student expressed that he did not find the f2f days boring. His positive perceptions of the f2f days could be attributed to the fact that students were always engaged in small group activities on f2f days.

Even though f2f days were perceived to be useful, the fact that it was only 50 minutes was limiting. I could have provided the students with more practice opportunities that cover a wide range of topics they studied online had I had a longer f2f class time. In the focus group, one student expressed that he wanted to practice everything that he studied online; however, he was able to practice only a small part of it on f2f days. Therefore, f2f days should be lengthened in order to allow for more interactive practice opportunities.

However, it was time consuming for me to teach and design ESL 1040 in the hybrid format, as it was the first time the University offered ESL 1040 in the hybrid format. Educating myself on hybrid instruction while creating lesson plans and modules on Canvas were more time consuming than I had anticipated. As a result, I believe that I did not have enough time to use the hybrid format to its full potential. Thus, it is essential that the course designers be provided with the time resources and assistance that they need while designing a course.

Another factor that is considered to be crucial in L2 acquisition is feedback. Through feedback students can see the differences between their interlanguage and the target language, which will in turn lead to the acquisition of the correct forms in the L2 (Goertler, 2012). The hybrid format was helpful in that it not only allowed students to work on the online exercises at their own pace but also provided them with immediate feedback as soon as they submitted their answers. The fact that Canvas can provide

immediate feedback was perceived helpful by the students.

However, one shortcoming was that not every exercise included explanations as to why a particular answer was correct or incorrect. Although the online practice exercises that solely focus on the forms of grammar structures did not require explanations, the ones that focus on the functions of the grammatical structures required explanations. Some of the students and I regarded the lack of explanations for each and every exercise as a shortcoming. However, due to the limited time I had, I was not able to write explanations for each of these assignments I created on Canvas. Therefore, should the course be taught in the hybrid format again, the explanations for each of the online exercises should be added. Knowing that students in the hybrid course did as good as the students in the f2f class, I hope that if explanations are provided for each online exercise on Canvas, students could perform better in the hybrid format.

The communication between the students and the teacher as well as the communication among the students were asynchronous on online days. As the data collected to answer Research Questions 2 and 3, which are teacher and learner perceptions, suggest, the asynchronous communication was perceived to be both helpful and not helpful in terms of different aspects of the course. A hybrid course can offer an individualized learning experience to students because they can make some of the decisions themselves instead of letting the teacher make the decisions for them. As stated in Chapter 4, students enjoyed the fact that they were able to study whenever and wherever they wanted because everything was on Canvas and no synchronous communication was needed. They also found it helpful that they were able to stop the video lectures, take notes easily and watch the videos again if they needed to. The fact

that students can work at their own pace also pushes them to spend more time thinking on each exercise than they would have in a f2f class, which was confirmed by the students in the questionnaire that they filled out. This in turn means that students can study more effectively by having more response time because of the asynchronous communication and without worrying about the time limitations that are usually set by teachers in f2f courses.

Asynchronous communication can also be considered helpful for shy students who have a hard time interacting with people f2f. In the questionnaire, one student commented that he found working online easy because he was shy and liked the fact that nobody could see him while he was studying. During the online days in the hybrid courses, students can work online in their comfort zone without needing to communicate orally with the teacher or peers. The opportunity to communicate through writing can help students realize their potential that they possibly could not in f2f classes. From these perspectives, asynchronous communication can be considered helpful in that it helped students learn better.

However, asynchronous communication brought some disadvantages together with it. First, during the focus group one student expressed that he did not enjoy that he was not able to ask questions to the teacher immediately when he had a question, and he felt sending email to the teacher or waiting for the f2f days to get an answer were tedious. I believe that his perception is related to his characteristics as a student; he needs outside help during the learning process, and he needs it right away. I believe this student can be labeled as a field-dependent learner as he prefers the synchronous communication to asynchronous communication and would probably perform better in a f2f traditional

classroom working with his peers and the teacher through synchronous communication (Chapelle & Heift, 2009). Therefore, one can assume that hybrid courses may not be as beneficial to field-dependent students as they are to field-independent students. However, more research needs to be done on this topic.

Another problem that can be associated with the asynchronous online communication is building a community in the classroom. An analysis of my perceptions revealed that students in the hybrid group made fewer friends in the classroom when compared to the f2f group, which was confirmed by some students in the hybrid group. In the questionnaire, some students disagreed with the statement, "This course created a sense of community among students that was comparable to a regular face-to-face class." One wrote that he could not make any friends in the class, and during the focus group some students commented that they did not interact with their peers outside of the class. The failure to create a community in the classroom could be attributed to the fact that there were not enough opportunities for students to work together outside of class and the class met f2f only once a week. By some extra work on the side of the teacher, a community can still be built among students in a hybrid course. Out-of-class activities where students and the instructor could get together and maybe work on a semester long project should be integrated into an ESL 1040 hybrid course in order to create opportunities for students to learn more about each other and the instructor.

My perceptions of the communication between the students and myself did not differ much between the two groups. However, I perceived that I had more communication with the students in the hybrid group. This can be attributed to the communication we had through Canvas. I was constantly watching students' progress on Canvas, answering their

questions throughout the week and giving feedback on their assignments, which created ongoing communication between the students and me in the hybrid format. I used Canvas for the f2f group and communicated with them through Canvas as well; however, there was much less communication compared to the hybrid group.

ESL 1040 is a writing course even though its main focus is on English grammar. In both groups (i.e., f2f and hybrid), readings, usually in the form of several paragraphs, were built into the courses, and grammar structures were taught through these readings. Students' perceptions of the readings are not available; however, my perceptions of the readings were positive as stated in the teaching journals. First, I believed that the readings created a meaningful context through which students could learn grammar structures. Second, my philosophy on teaching writing is that reading is a prerequisite to writing as reading is the analysis of a writing piece. Kennedy and Bolitho (1985) explained why reading is a prerequisite to writing:

The actual content of the written text may be the same but the difference is that reading is concerned with the recognition of aspects of that structure, whereas writing has to do with the production of the text. In this respect reading may be regarded as a necessary precondition for any writing task, since the writer must be aware of the structure of a particular type of writing before he can produce it. (p. 85)

Therefore, it seemed to me that both groups made considerable progress in their paragraph writing skills due to the readings and the paragraph level writing lessons integrated into the courses together with topics on English grammar. I perceived that the hybrid group made more progress in terms of their writing skills; however, a detailed analysis was not made regarding their composition assignments. On the condition that my perceptions are true, I would attribute the improvement the hybrid group made to the fact that they did more reading than the f2f group in that they needed to read more in order to

complete tasks on Canvas: instructions, my comments, feedback given by Canvas, their peers' comments on the discussion pages and e-mail exchanges between me and them. If a detailed analysis of students' writing assignments are in line with my perceptions, this would also provide support for Adair-Hauck, Willingham-McLain, and Young's study (1999) in which they reported that the students in the group who had online days performed as well as the control group in listening and speaking, but better on reading and writing.

Two objectives of the ESL 1040 course were 1) students will be able to develop well-constructed paragraphs and 2) students will be able to edit paragraph length compositions. The teaching journals included positive remarks about the two composition assignments as they helped achieve the two objectives of the course. I believe that these assignments were very helpful because students received individual feedback on their grammar and organization skills and then revised their first draft by going through an editing process. Increasing the number of the composition assignments in ESL 1040 courses would be very helpful. However, how much time the instructor can dedicate to grading composition assignments should be taken into consideration as giving feedback on writing assignments usually takes a considerable amount of time.

In the hybrid format, the lectures were given through video lectures. Each topic was taught in one single video, which could be up to 30 minutes. My aim in creating only one single video for each topic was that I thought it would be easier for students to find the relevant information regarding a grammar topic if everything was in one single video. However, one student's perception of the video lectures was different. He suggested that I divide each video lecture into more specific topics as it would be easier to find some

specific information when students need to go back and revise a certain topic. After reconstructing my perceptions of the video lectures with the feedback I received from the student, I believe that video lectures should be divided into shorter parts as it would not only help students find certain topics easier but also help them stay focused and not get bored.

According to the analysis of pre- and posttests, students in the f2f format performed no worse or better than the students in the hybrid format, which suggests that both formats are equally good for the ESL 1040 course. The features that were common in both courses were perceived to be useful in the f2f format as well: integration of reading to teach grammar, composition assignments, and integration of paragraph-level writing into the ESL 1040 course. One thing that was perceived to be better in the f2f format was the flexibility in the way new information was taught or practiced. Synchronous communication, as stated in the teaching journals, allowed me to present and practice new information in different and fun ways as opposed to the hybrid format as there was only so much that could be achieved asynchronously on Canvas. However, the f2f format was very challenging in terms of keeping students' attention in class. I attribute this problem to three possible factors: the course being a grammar-only course, my lack of classroom management skills, or most of the students' being 18-years old and still in the transition period between high school and the university. Based on my experience in the f2f format, I conclude that there should be some extrinsic motivation to keep students' attention in class; therefore, in-class quizzes whose answers are given throughout the lectures should be a regular part of the courses to help students' keep focused on the class.

Limitations of the Study

The data that were gathered to answer the research questions for this action research project have been analyzed by me, which means that the analysis reflects my own ideas and beliefs based on my experiences. It is possible that the results could be interpreted differently by someone whose experiences were different from mine.

The results of this study are not generalizable to a large population. The results are intended to be generalizable only to ESL 1040 students at the University. This is not a weakness of the study *per se*, but more of a statement about the need for more research on language learning in hybrid courses in other contexts. A limitation of the action research project itself is the number of students who participated in the study. Only 13 students in the hybrid group and 19 students in the f2f group participated in the pre- and posttests, and only 12 students volunteered to fill in the questionnaire in the hybrid format. Had there been more participants, more concise results could have been obtained.

The differences in students' language backgrounds, ages, and individual preferences for learning were not considered in the current study; the only criterion was the section in which the students were enrolled. Individual differences in particular might have affected the results, as hybrid courses may be more attractive to students to have certain characteristics as learners (e.g., conscientiousness).

Because of time limitations and my main interest in researching the hybrid ESL 1040 course, I focused on collecting perceptual data from students in the hybrid course. Aside from the data collected from the teaching journals and end of semester evaluations in the two courses (and reported on in Chapter 4), no other data were collected for the f2f ESL 1040 course. The end of semester course evaluations that the students in the f2f group

completed were not useful in informing the research questions in this study. The instrument did not include questions that would give me insight about the teaching and learning practices that were part of the f2f ESL 1040 course because it was designed for use with every ESL course offered at the University. The students in the f2f group did not participate in a focus group as they were considered the control group for the purposes of the study.

The fact that the data were collected in only the first cycle of the action research project was another limitation to the study. I perceive this to be a limitation as I believe that curriculum design is an iterative process and that a course should be revised and refined and that revisions should be based on student feedback and teachers' perceptions of the course. Only after multiple revisions using this process would a course likely reach its maximum potential in terms of promoting effectiveness in learning. The hybrid format and the f2f format would have been utilized better had I had the time to complete a second cycle to this action research project after revising the two formats based on the data collected in the first cycle. However, due to the timeline in which the research was conducted, it was not possible to complete a second cycle.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The data for this action research project were collected from the first cycle. Based on the feedback received from the students in the hybrid format and my perceptions of both formats, the two formats could be revised and then a second cycle to this action research project could be conducted to better understand the effectiveness of both ESL 1040 formats. In the second cycle, more data on the f2f format should be collected as there were not much data on the f2f format in the first cycle, which is one of the limitations of

the current study.

The analysis of the teaching journals included my perceptions about which group made the most progress in their writing skills. I perceived that the hybrid group made more progress in their writing skills when compared to the f2f group. I attributed this perception to the fact that the hybrid group did more reading than the f2f group as they had to read more on Canvas to complete tasks. A future study could compare students' performances on their writing skills between the hybrid and f2f formats. The second cycle of this action research project could focus on students' writing skills as well.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The overall purpose of this action research project was to investigate whether hybrid instruction could have a positive effect on students' knowledge of English grammar and editing skills. In addition, it also focused on the teacher's and students' perceptions of the hybrid format. The research was conducted in two sections of the ESL 1040 course at the University and was quasi-experimental: one group received instruction in the hybrid format while the other received instruction in a traditional f2f format. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected to answer the research questions.

Quantitative data came from the pre- and posttests that were given to both groups at the beginning and end of the semester and the questionnaire students in the hybrid group filled out. The pretest was used to understand whether the students in both groups (i.e., hybrid and f2f) were statistically different than each other. A *t* test was used to analyze the pretest, and the results showed that there was no significant difference between the two groups as measured by the pretest; $t(30) = .392, p = .698$. As a result, the posttest was also analyzed by using a *t* test, and it showed that the two groups were not significantly different from each other after the treatment as well; $t(30) = .628, p = .535$. Therefore, it was concluded that both the hybrid and f2f formats of the ESL 1040 course were equal in terms of how effective they were on students' performance on English grammar and editing skills.

The questionnaire was used to understand students' perceptions of the hybrid format and receive feedback from them to inform instruction in the ESL 1040 course. The results indicated that students were satisfied with the hybrid format overall. However, the hybrid format was perceived to be disadvantageous in terms of building a community in the classroom; some students stated that they do not think the hybrid format is comparable to a f2f course in terms of building a community. The results also indicated that students had problems managing their time well as some of them stated that they finished all the assignments on the last night before the f2f days and did not allow enough time to study effectively during the online days.

Qualitative data came from several sources: teaching journals, the two open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire, and the focus group. Teaching journals were used to investigate my perceptions of the two formats. I perceived that the two formats were equally good; however, classroom management was perceived to be very challenging in the f2f format, and this problem was attributed to three possible reasons: 1) my lack of classroom management skills as an entry-level ESL instructor, 2) the students' average age being 18-years old and their being still in the transition between high school the university, and/or 3) the course being a grammar-only course. Therefore, I suggest that in-class quizzes should be a regular part of the course to keep students focused on the lesson.

I perceived the hybrid format to be a good fit for a grammar course as the distinction between the f2f and online days were complementary; online days were used to introduce new topics and practice through online exercises on Canvas while the f2f days were used for more interactive activities to practice what students studied online. However, I

believed that the f2f days were not long enough and suggested that f2f contact time should be lengthened, which might also help build a community in the classroom.

The focus group and the two open-ended questions were also used to better understand students' perceptions of the hybrid format and receive feedback from them to refine the course. What students liked the most about the course was scheduling flexibility. Students also commented that they liked being able to watch the video lectures again and stop them to take notes, the linear setup of modules on Canvas, f2f days including fun activities and being able to receive immediate automatic feedback from Canvas. Students also expressed that they received the same quality education in the hybrid format compared to traditional f2f classes; however, they also expressed that there is a lack of sense of being a community in the hybrid format.

Students had several suggestions to refine the design of the hybrid course. One of the suggestions was to lengthen the f2f days to be able to do more practice activities as the f2f days were only 50 minutes and limited practice opportunities were provided. The two other suggestions were about keeping students motivated to work more effectively during online days: 1) making parts of the modules due at different times of the week instead of making all the assignments due before the f2f class and 2) increasing the weight of the online exercises so that they have more effect on students' final grade, which could give extrinsic motivation to the students to keep working on the modules throughout the week. Students also added that every online exercise on Canvas should have explanations because sometimes knowing which answer is correct or incorrect is not helpful to understand the reason why it is correct or incorrect.

Based on the results of this action research study, one of the most important

conclusions that I have reached is that being successful in a hybrid course is highly related to students' characteristics and study habits. Looking at the ideas for improvements for the second cycle, one can see that almost all of them are related to keeping students motivated to work during online days and helping them manage their time well. Students who are responsible for their own learning would not need these kinds of forces to stay motivated in a hybrid course; instead, they would take the initiative to study and learn without any kind of extrinsic motivation. As a result, one can conclude that it is of high importance that students know their characteristics and study habits well before they decide on taking any hybrid courses.

That not enough data were collected regarding students' perceptions of the f2f ESL 1040 course was one of the limitations to the current study in terms of informing the field about the nature of the relationship between f2f and hybrid courses. Had there been more data, an effective comparison could have been made between the two formats. The fact that the data were collected from the first cycle of this action research project was regarded as another limitation as the two formats were not utilized at their utmost potential. Based on the results of this research study, both formats should be refined and a second cycle to this research project should be conducted. Having more participants could have helped reach more concise results in terms of the quantitative data collected for the study.

APPENDIX A

PRETEST AND POSTTEST

ESL 1040 Final Exam

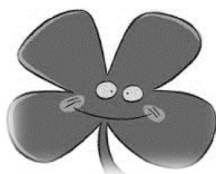
1. Before you start, please fill in the box below with your information.

- **Name:**
- **Native Language:**
- **Age:**
- **How many years have you studied English (including this semester)? Select one of the following.**
 - 🍏 Less than a year
 - 🍏 1 - 3 years
 - 🍏 3 – 5 years
 - 🍏 5 - 7 years
 - 🍏 More than 7 years

General Instructions

1. You will have **90 minutes** to complete the exam.
2. There are **10 paragraphs** in the exam. The paragraphs may contain errors. Each possible error is shaded. If the sentences are correct, you will mark **(a) NO CHANGE**. If the sentences are not correct, you will choose **b, c or d** to fix the error.
3. The heading of each paragraph lists of the types of possible grammar errors.

Good Luck



Part 1

Part 1 contains possible errors involving *adjective clauses, noun clauses, adverb clauses, fragments*.

Many college students are having dilemmas when they are declaring their ¹**majors. Because** it is difficult for them to choose between what they should study and what they really want to study. When ²**declaring** your major, you should consider many factors. Of course your parents' ideas are valuable, but you are the one ³**whom** will do this job for the rest of your life. Therefore, it is so important that you choose a job ⁴**that** you enjoy doing. A job ⁵**to which** you can dedicate yourself is a job worth working.

1. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) majors because
(c) majors because,
(d) majors. because
2. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) declare
(c) to declaring
(d) to declare
3. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) who
(c) what
(d) when
4. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) what
(c) where
(d) whom
5. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) which
(c) to whom
(d) to what

Part 2

Part 2 contains possible errors involving *adjective clauses*, *noun clauses*, and *adverb clauses*.

Before ¹**moved** into my new apartment last year, I thought about some of the things that I wanted to buy. A 50-inch high-definition TV was at the top of my list. However, after I had compared prices in several electronics ²**stores I** realized that I couldn't afford such an expensive TV with my salary. A friend advised me to look for a used TV ³**before giving up**. He said I might be able to find ⁴**what did I want** for a much lower price. ⁵**Despite** I thought it was a crazy idea, I went to an auction website that sells used electronics. The website had a lot of TVs for sale at low prices. I bid on a 50-inch TV that looked ⁶**great. Even though** the reviews weren't very good. I guess I was lucky that my bid didn't win!

1. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) moving
(c) having been moved
(d) move
2. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) stores which I
(c) stores, I
(d) stores. I
3. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) before gave up
(c) before give up
(d) before have given up
4. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) what I wanted
(c) what I want did
(d) which did I want
5. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) Although
(c) Despite of
(d) In spite of
6. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) great, though
(c) great even though
(d) great because

Part 3

Part 3 contains possible errors involving *punctuation, fragments, and run-on sentences*.

It was ¹**2012, when** I decided to come to the U.S. to study Economics. My parents were not happy with my decision ²**at first. Because** they thought it would be dangerous for me to live alone in a foreign country ³**however** after seeing that I really wanted to have education at an American ⁴**university they** gave me their full support. The application process ⁵**was painful, but I never** gave up. I took two exams before I could apply ⁶**to schools TOEFL and the GRE**, and had to prepare a lot of other documents. It took me an entire semester to ⁷**apply, I am** so happy that it paid off at the end though!

1. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) 2012 when
(c) 2012; when
(d) 2012
2. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) at first; because
(c) at first because
(d) at first, because
3. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) ;however
(c) however,
(d) ;however,
4. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) university; they
(c) university. They
(d) university, they
5. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) was painful, I never
(c) was painful; but I never
(d) was painful I never
6. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) to schools; TOEFL and the GRE
(c) to schools: TOEFL and the GRE
(d) to schools, TOEFL and the GRE
7. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) apply, but I am
(c) apply I am
(d) apply: I am

Part 4

Part 4 contains possible errors involving *transitions*.

There are some things that you can do for free or at discounted rate as a student at the University of Utah. All you need is your U Card. ¹**First of all**, you can take the TRAX, shuttles and buses for free to get to all sorts of fun activities around the city. You should definitely go skiing. You can take the bus for free to get to the resorts, and there is really good snow up on the mountains during the winter.

²**Besides**, you get a student discount if you show your U Card at the ticket counter. You should ³**too** visit Natural History Museum and Red Butte Gardens.

⁴**After all**, the black shuttle will take you there for free and the museum is also free with your U Card! Just make sure you have your card with you all the time.

⁵**So**, you might miss out on some great opportunities.

1. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) Also
(c) Secondly
(d) Besides

2. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) Meanwhile
(c) Therefore
(d) After all

3. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) also
(c) first
(d) second

4. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) Therefore
(c) Besides
(d) In the end

5. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) Otherwise
(c) Besides
(d) As a result

Part 5

Part 5 contains possible errors involving *nouns and articles*.

In general, when you first arrive in ¹**the city**, you don't have much ²**knowledges** about where to buy things. However, you receive ³**advices** from the local ⁴**peoples** and end up going to ⁵**a most known** and conveniently located places. Probably, ⁶**a first stop** for every international student in Salt Lake City is Smith's Marketplace. Smith's Marketplace offers almost everything you could need: ⁷**furnitures**, food, electronics and clothing. If you haven't been there yet, I am sure you will sometime soon.

1. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) an city
(c) a city
(d) city
2. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) knowledge
(c) an knowledge
(d) a knowledge
3. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) an advice
(c) the advice
(d) advice
4. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) persons
(c) a people
(d) people
5. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) the most known
(c) an most known
(d) most known
6. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) the first stop
(c) an first stop
(d) a first stops
7. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) furniture
(c) a furniture
(d) the furniture

Part 6

Part 6 contains possible errors involving *verb tenses*.

Dear diary,

Sorry that I ¹**haven't been writing** recently. So many things ²**happen** yesterday that I don't know where to start. The big news is that I finally ³**hear** back from the University of Utah: I ⁴**am starting** University of Utah's business program in Fall 2013. The other big news is that my whole family and I will visit my aunt and uncle in Sydney in August. They ⁵**will have been married** for 50 years in August, so we ⁶**will celebrate** together. These are the good news. I have some bad news too. You know that I ⁷**have been going** to the dentist for my braces. I was hoping that I would get them taken off next week, but when I ⁸**was visiting** my doctor, he said that I had to wear the braces for one more month.

1. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) wasn't writing
(c) will have written
(d) am writing
2. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) was happening
(c) happened
(d) was happened
3. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) will hear
(c) heard
(d) was hearing
4. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) has started
(c) was starting
(d) has been starting
5. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) will marry
(c) married
(d) had been married
6. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) was celebrating
(c) will have been celebrating
(d) has been celebrating
7. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) am going to go
(c) has been going
(d) will go
8. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) visited
(c) will visit
(d) has visited

Part 7

Part 7 contains possible errors involving *subject verb agreement, articles, and prepositions*.

Halloween is an American holiday celebrated every year ¹**on** October 31st. People who are not familiar with it think that it is ²**a** holiday for kids, but it is not. It is an all-ages celebration. Everyone ³**celebrate** it! People ⁴**does** all sorts of fun activities ⁵**on** Halloween ⁶**in** their homes: they wear masks and have costume parties, and put up scary decorations. They also carve pumpkins, and light them up at night. Moreover, kids go trick-or-treating ⁷**on** this day. They get lots of candy and enjoy the night with family and friends.

1. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) in
(c) at
(d) of

2. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) the
(c) an
(d) -

3. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) celebrating
(c) celebrates
(d) celebrated

4. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) doing
(c) done
(d) do

5. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) at
(c) on
(d) by

6. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) at
(c) of
(d) on

7. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) at
(c) in
(d) by

Part 8

Part 8 contains possible errors involving *conditionals and modals*.

The end of the semester is coming. My grades haven't been very good so far and finals are starting next week. However, if I ¹**studied** hard, I can still pass my courses. I really ²**must have studied** earlier! Earlier in the semester one of my professors even sent me a warning email about my grades. If I ³**had listened** to her, I wouldn't have been in this situation now. I ⁴**has to work** day and night to get ready for my finals now because I do not have much time left. My friend, Alice, also ⁵**should studies** hard for the finals, so we made plans to study together. If we ⁶**meet** at 7:30 in the morning, and study till 7:30 at night for a week, we should be able to review all the material covered in class.

1. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) had studied
(c) study
(d) will study
2. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) should have studied
(c) must studied
(d) must study
3. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) will listen
(c) should listen
(d) listened
4. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) had to work
(c) has works
(d) have to work
5. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) should to study
(c) should study
(d) should studied
6. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) will meet
(c) met
(d) had met

Part 9

Part 9 contains possible errors involving *passive voice and participial adjectives*.

Hurricane Sandy was one of the most **¹terrified** disasters that have happened ever in the U.S to date. Even though it mainly affected New Jersey and New York, 23 other states **²were also affected** by the storm. Over 100 people **³were died** from drowning. It was **⁴frustrating** that some of these casualties could have been prevented if necessary cautions **⁵had been took**. Several months have passed since the hurricane, but the severe damage Hurricane Sandy left behind **⁶hasn't be cleaned up** yet.

1. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) terrify
(c) terrifying
(d) be terrified
2. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) were also to affect
(c) were been affected
(d) were affect
3. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) died
(c) were being died
(d) were to die
4. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) frustrate
(c) frustrated
(d) be frustrated
5. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) had been taking
(c) had been taken
(d) had be taken
6. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) hasn't been cleaned up
(c) hasn't been clean up
(d) hasn't be cleaning up

Part 10

Part 10 contains possible errors involving *gerunds and infinitives*.

If you are thinking about ¹**to do** something fun this Sunday, you should consider ²**going** to Memorial Park. It is a good idea ³**to take** your dog to the park because you can let him off the leash. If you decide ⁴**having** a picnic, you are welcome to do so. However, it is important ⁵**not to leave** trash behind so that everyone can enjoy the park.

1. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) doing
(c) do
(d) to doing
2. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) go
(c) to go
(d) to going
3. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) take
(c) taking
(d) to taking
4. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) have
(c) to have
(d) to having
5. (a) NO CHANGE
(b) not leaving
(c) leave not
(d) not to leaving

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed to find out the perceptions of ESL 1040 students of hybrid instruction. Part A is about personal information that is relevant to the study. Part B aims to find out students' opinions about specific aspects of the course. The last part, Part C, aims to find out how students interacted with the online modules on Canvas.

Thank you for taking the time and effort to respond to this questionnaire. Please give your honest opinion on the questions below. Rest assured that the information you share here is confidential. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at tulay.orucu@utah.edu.

PART A

Personal Information

1. Please select the age group to which you belong.

- ☐ 18-22
- ☐ 22- 24
- ☐ Younger than 18
- ☐ Older than 24

2. Please select your native language.

- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Korean
- ☐ Arabic
- ☐ Japanese

3. Please select your gender.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

4. Have you taken any hybrid or online courses before?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5. Please write how old you were when you started studying English.

I was _____ years old when I started studying English.

PART B

Please indicate how strongly you agree to the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The modules on Canvas were easy to follow.				
2. The online video lectures helped me with English grammar and editing.				
3. It was helpful to have access to the video lectures all the time so that I could watch them whenever I needed.				
4. The online exercises helped me practice English grammar and editing skills.				
5. The readings assigned from the book or outside sources helped me get ready for what we would cover in the module.				
6. I spent more time thinking during the online discussions, assignments and exercises than I would have in a face-to-face class environment.				
7. The face-to-face classes on Wednesdays provided me with opportunities to practice what I had studied in the modules.				
8. It was good to be able to work individually at my own pace (=speed).				
9. I enjoyed having control over my schedule. (Being able to study on Canvas whenever and wherever I wanted to.)				
10. I received timely feedback (within 24-48 hours) for the assignments my instructor needed to grade.				
11. I was able to get individualized attention from the instructor when I needed it.				
12. Although I only saw the teacher during the face-to-face days of the class, I felt her presence on Canvas all the time.				

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13. This course created a sense of community among students that was comparable to a regular face-to-face class.				
14. I had enough opportunities to practice English grammar and editing.				
15. This hybrid course encouraged students to discuss ideas and concepts with other students.				
16. I think using computers make learning more interesting.				
17. This hybrid course did not meet my learning needs.				
18. I feel hybrid courses are as effective as face-to-face courses.				
19. I am very satisfied with this hybrid course.				
20. I would like to take another hybrid course.				

PART C

Please indicate how often you did the following statements.

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
1. I watched the video lectures my instructor recorded for each module.				
2. When I took the online exercises, I was honest. Honest: I did my best on the first try; I didn't just click on the submit button to get the answers to enter it on my second try.				
	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never

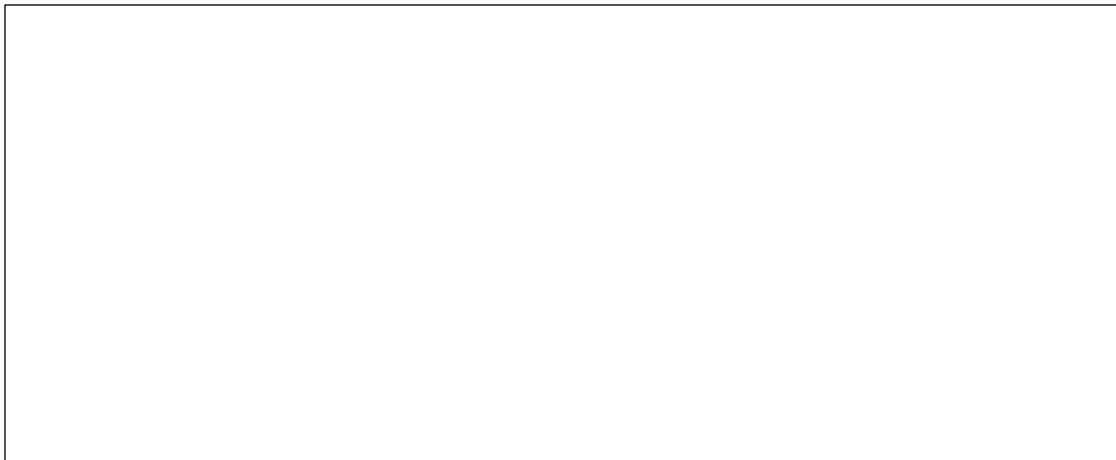
3. I finished the modules before our face-to-face classes on Wednesdays.				
4. I finished the module on the last night before our face-to-face class.				
5. When I didn't understand something, I searched for the answer. (i.e. searching online, asking the instructor or someone else who is knowledgeable)				
6. When my instructor left a comment on my assignments, I read it carefully.				
7. I participated in the group activities we had on our face-to-face days.				
8. I found working with computers easy.				
9. I was able to manage my time. (Allowed myself enough time to work on the modules)				

PART D

Please answer the following questions.

1. In what ways is a hybrid course better or worse compared to a traditional face-to-face class? Why?

2. What would you change in this course? Why?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the question.

APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What do you think about the modules on Canvas in terms of their content and organization? Were they helpful?
2. What did you like the most about the course?
3. What did you like the least about the course?
4. When you compare a hybrid and a traditional face-to-face class, which one do you think is better and why? Or do you find them equally good?
5. What did you think about the face-to-face days in terms of your own learning?
6. Did you feel a sense of community with your peers in the class even though the class has only met once a week? Why? Do you think the sense of community is different in a f2f class? Why?

APPENDIX D

TEACHING JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Briefly describe the lesson.
2. What were your personal teaching goals for the lesson?
3. What were the performance objectives for the students? (i.e., statements about what students would be able to do at the end of the lesson?)
4. What were the instructional activities and learning strategies that you used?
5. How did these activities and strategies help students achieve the performance objectives?
6. What problems did you encounter in teaching the lesson?
7. In your opinion, what was most effective part in your lesson? How do you know if it was effective?
8. In your opinion, what was least effective in your lesson? How do you know it was ineffective?
9. If you could teach the lesson again, what would you do differently?

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